

ANN STALCUP



THREE WHO SURVIVED

Child Survivors of World War II

THREE WHO SURVIVED:

Child Survivors of World War II

By
Ann Stalcup

This story is dedicated to the children of WWII - both those who survived and the many who didn't.

My thanks to the many people who have read and re-read my manuscript and who have checked it for historical accuracy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE-HILDA

- 1926 to 1934-The Early Years
- 1934 to 1936-The Judge
- 1935-Anti-Semitism
- 1936-The Olympics
- 1936 to 1938-Goldschmidtschule
- 1936 to 1938-Changes
- 1938-Kristallnacht
- 1938-For Jews Only
- Spring 1939-Preparing to Leave Germany
- Spring 1939-Kindertransport
- 1939-Boarding School
- September 1939-Hilda's Parents Escape
- 1940-The Blitz
- Summer and Autumn 1940-Life in the Christian Home
- October 1940-Going to America
- November 1940-A New Life in California
- The 1940's-School Days
- 1945-The War in Europe
- 1945-News from Overseas and a Reunion

PART TWO-PAT

- December 1932 to 1935-Changes
- 1935 to 1938-Early Childhood
- 1939-The Coming War

1939-War is Declared
Summer 1940-Evacuation
Autumn 1940-Life on a Farm
Autumn 1940-The New School
Spring and Summer 1941-Life in Cornwall
August 1941-The Drummonds Visit Cornwall
September 1941 to June 1942-School Begins Again
Spring 1943-Going Home
July 1942 to January 1943-Life in London
January 1943-Tragedy Strikes
January 1943-The Funeral
January to October 1943-Life Goes On
1945-Two Priceless Gifts

PART THREE-URSULA

1925 to 1932-Family Life
1933-Hitler Comes to Power
1934 to 1935-Anti-Semitism
1936-School Days
1938-Changes
Early 1939-A Chance to Escape
September to December 1939-Curfew and Rationing
1940-The Danger Increases
Fall 1940-Forced Labor
1941-Factory Work
1941-Restrictions
January 1943-The Arrest
1943-The Waiting Period
1943-Deportation
1943-Theresienstadt Concentration Camp
1943 and 1944-The Red Cross Visit
January to May 1945-Final Months of the War

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book tells the stories of three child survivors of World War II. One spent her childhood in England, the other two in Germany. Each of their stories is quite different.

Pat was four-and-a-half when the war between Great Britain and Germany began on September 3, 1939, but it wasn't until she was seven that her family life in England changed drastically. For Hilda and Ursula, both born

in Berlin, their worlds turned upside down on January 30, 1933, when Hitler was elected Chancellor of Germany. Hilda would be seven four months later; Ursula had just had her seventh birthday.

All three children survived the war for different reasons and in different locations. One escaped Germany days before war was declared, one barely lived through a bombing raid in England, while the third survived a concentration camp.

As young children, all three had wonderfully happy childhoods, childhoods that changed suddenly and unexpectedly for each of them when they were seven.

PART ONE

HILDA

A Young Jewish Girl in Berlin on the Eve of War

1926 to 1934 The Early Years

Hilda was born in Berlin, Germany's capital city. It was May 1926. At that time, life in Germany was good for Hilda's family. Hilda, their third daughter, was welcomed with joy by her parents, George and Gertrude Anker.

Until she was seven, Hilda had a wonderfully happy childhood. Her father owned a company that manufactured men's clothing. Although the Great Depression in 1929 affected people the world over, Mr. Anker's business continued to provide a comfortable life for his wife and three girls, Eva, Dora (nicknamed Dodi), and Hilda. They had a comfortable home, plenty of good food, and nice clothing.

The girls took dancing and piano lessons, and together, the family visited museums and art galleries. Their lives were filled with cultural activities. And since Hilda's father was a serious art collector, they grew up surrounded by beautiful things.

The Ankers were Jewish, a fact they had always celebrated with pride. On Friday nights they celebrated the Sabbath by making *challis* bread and lighting candles. On Jewish holidays like Purim and Yom Kippur, the family went to the synagogue to pray.

Almost overnight, everything in the Anker's stable, happy lives changed completely when on January 1933, Adolph Hitler became Chancellor of Germany and his party, the National Socialist German Workers' Party came into power.

Hitler's party was referred to as Nazis, Nazi being short for "Nazional," the German word for National. In 1932, only a third of Germany's voters supported the Nazi party, but there were so many other political parties at that time, no one party was large enough to defeat them. And no one realized how dangerous they would become. Hitler's rival, Von Hindenburg, had done little to campaign, feeling that his popularity would ensure his leadership.

Prior to the election, in 1932, Hitler's supporters dropped leaflets all over the German countryside telling people what his party could do for them. He promised bread, work, and greatness for his country. He took over all newspapers, radio channels, and theaters. His speeches were recorded and distributed. After the humiliation the German's had suffered in WW1, they were ready for promises of a better life. Anyone caught listening to voice of America or the British BBC, was considered a traitor.

On April 1, 1933, Hitler ordered a nationwide boycott of Jewish-owned businesses. All over Berlin, Nazi Storm Troopers blocked the entrances of stores, law firms, and medical buildings that were owned by Jews. The Nazis wore swastikas on their arms. The sight of the swastika, Hitler's symbol, quickly came to mean terror for Hilda's family and for everyone else who was Jewish. The three-thousand-year-old swastika had originally been reversed and in most parts of the world was a good luck symbol.

Storm Troopers stood outside businesses holding placards bearing the words, "These are Jews. Don't do business here." In stores throughout Germany, in towns both large and small, signs appeared in the windows. They read, "Don't buy from Jews. The shop owners were degraded in every way possible. In Berlin, Hilda's parents took their daughters walking so that they could see which were Jewish-owned stores. From then on they shopped only in those stores. Anti-Jewish posters were everywhere, the posters tailored to mothers, students, and so on, all idealizing the perfect German.

Throughout the city, marchers carried Nazi flags. Berlin no longer seemed like the beautiful city it had always been. At home, the Ankers no longer laughed or talked or acted as they had in the past. Now everyone whispered, telling each other, "Don't say this. Don't say that." Hilda's safe world was changing rapidly and things only got worse.

Since Hilda was dark-skinned, her mother often dressed her in red. Now her mother told her, "No more bright colors, And don't ever wear red." Jewish people wanted to do nothing that would draw attention to themselves. Other than shopping at Jewish stores, being Jewish was a secret the Anchors needed to keep.

In 1934, Germany's president, Paul On Hindenburg died. Adolph Hitler, Germany's Chancellor, also became president, or "*Der Führer*," as he was called. Already Hitler's first concentration camp had opened at Dachau, near

Munich. It quickly became one of the infamous “death camps.” But although rumors flew within the Jewish community, unless a relative disappeared, most Jewish families had difficulty believing the rumors. Nor did they truly understand the danger they were in

1934 to 1936 **The Judge**

Hilda and her family lived in an apartment building owned by her father. An important judge and his family occupied the second floor apartment above the Ankers. The judge was a Gentile. Gentile is a term used by Jewish people for those who are not Jewish. His little girl was the same age as Hilda, and she and Hilda had always enjoyed playing together. Suddenly, the judge’s wife announced that their daughter could no longer play with Hilda. Hilda’s dad always supported his girls, so he said, “You can play with someone else. You don’t have to play with her.” But Hilda felt very hurt, and at seven years old it was difficult for her to understand the reason.

Even though the little girls no longer played together, the judge was a wonderful person. His wife belonged to the Nazi party, but the judge did not. Almost every night the judge’s wife went to meetings that were being held for women of the Nazi party. And while his wife was gone, the judge visited Hilda’s apartment.

Whenever possible, he and Hilda’s dad shut themselves into her father’s den, and for a long time, Hilda did not know what was going on. One day she sneaked to the door of the den and saw that they were listening to the news on the short-wave radio. They did this whenever they could. Since his wife was a Nazi, the judge could not tell her what he was doing. Already it was impossible to trust anyone, not even your wife, if she had different political views from yours.

It was a terrible time to be in Berlin. Many Gentile families were like that of the judge. Family members no longer trusted each other. If one of them was disloyal to the Nazi party, perhaps by saying something against it, or by helping a Jewish person, another family member might report him.

The judge really took his life in his hands when he was a good neighbor to Hilda’s family. Had the judge’s wife known what he was doing, she would almost certainly have turned him in to the Gestapo, Hitler’s personal, ruthless army. The judge would have been imprisoned and probably killed. It was 1935. Hilda had recently had her ninth birthday. Already two frightening years had passed since her life changed so suddenly at age seven.

1935

Anti-Semitism

At a meeting in Nuremberg, on September 14, 1935, thirty new laws were passed. Each of them restricted the way of life of Jewish families. Jews lost their German citizenship. They were forced to surrender all silver to the Nazis. They were no longer allowed to talk to Gentiles. Employers were pressured to fire all Jewish workers.

In small German towns anti-Semitism (feelings and acts against Jewish people) was much worse than it was in the cities. Many Jewish people moved to Berlin convinced they would be less noticeable there than in the countryside.

Hilda's grandmother (her mother's mother) and her two sisters lived in a tiny town called Schlawe. They experienced so much anti-Semitism that Hilda's father suggested they move to Berlin to be with the family. Hilda's grandfather had already died.

Hilda was ten when her grandmother and her sisters rented an apartment across the street from them. Her grandmother was a sweet lady. She often came to take care of the three girls so that their parents could go out at night. They were trying to live as normal a life as possible.

Hilda's family enjoyed having them so close, but it was hard for the girls' grandmother to adjust. In the country, as the wife of a mill owner, she had once been a much respected member of her community. Now, as a widow living in the city amongst strangers, she lost her self-confidence.

At age ten, girl students left Elementary School, or *Volkschule*, to go to the Lyceum. Ten year old boys went to the *Gymnasium*. Both were public schools, but Hilda had to first pass an important exam, or she would be sent to a less academic school.

Although Jewish children were being turned away from state schools, passing the exam might help Hilda to be accepted. Wanting to ensure that she would pass, her parents hired a professor to work with her. When he came to the house to discuss becoming Hilda's tutor, Hilda was out with her cousin. Hilda, and her cousin Ursel, had been playing in the park. On their way home they saw a large group of soldiers marching by. The marchers carried Nazi flags. The law stated that whenever you saw a Nazi parade, you must raise your arm stiffly in front of you and say "Heil Hitler." It was a salute Hitler had borrowed from Italy's leader, Mussolini.

Ursel was older than Hilda. She said, "I'm not going to salute." Hilda was nine. She didn't realize how dangerous it was to ignore the rule, so she said, "I'm not going to do it either!" The girls hid in a doorway, and when the parade had passed, Ursula said, "O.K. We can come out now. We'll go back to your house."

When they reached Hilda's apartment, Hilda burst out with the story. She barely noticed the stranger sitting there with her mother, and at that time she wasn't scared enough about the Nazi situation to realize she should be more careful. Her mother became extremely upset. She kept saying, "I'm sure you didn't do that!" and they said, "Yes, we did!" They felt so proud of the fact that they'd defied Hitler.

Then Hilda's mother said to the tutor, "Please don't mention what my daughter said. She doesn't understand the danger." At this point, Ursel vanished. She didn't want to be a part of it! Then Hilda realized that she could get her whole family in trouble. She also realized that if you did or said something against the Nazis, you had better not tell anyone about it.

Not all Germans were evil. A great many were really good people, but if anyone spoke out against the Nazi Party, they could be imprisoned or even killed. The tutor was a very nice man. He never told anyone what he had heard, and he worked hard with Hilda until she took the test. He told her that she wouldn't have any trouble passing the exam; she had already known the material before he started working with her.

After a while, Hilda received a letter saying that she had passed, earning one of the highest marks. A week later, another letter arrived. It stated that she could not attend the state school because she was Jewish. She was crushed. Everyone in the family felt terrible for her. Her two older sisters were already attending the school, and, for the time being, they were allowed to continue. When the family sat down together, Hilda said, "What's going to happen to me now? I can't go to school!" For Jewish families, getting a good education is the most important thing in their children's lives.

Around the corner from where Hilda lived was a long-established school for Orthodox Jews. Hilda's family belonged to a synagogue and celebrated all of the Jewish holidays. but when Hilda and her father walked the one block to the school, they saw some Hasidic Jews wearing black bowler hats, their long hair in ringlets. The girls wore long dresses. To Hilda, they looked very strange. Hilda's father explained that Hasidic Jews had dressed that way for centuries and their clothing represented their beliefs. But Hilda imagined she would have to dress like the other girls and said to her dad, "I'm not going to that school!" So he took her home, supporting her decision completely.

Many highly qualified experienced teachers lost their jobs because they were Jewish. As a result, seemingly overnight, Jewish schools developed all over Berlin. A close friend of Hilda's was attending such a school. In the suburbs, it would be about a forty-five minute ride on the underground. Hilda's father went with her to look at the school. It took twenty-minutes to walk there once they got off the train. In spite of the long journey, they liked the school and it was agreed that Hilda should go there.

1936 - The Olympics

Late that summer, soon after Hilda's tenth birthday, and around the time that she started at the new school, the 1936 Olympic Games were held in Berlin. Already, disturbing news had reached the United States and there was considerable debate as to whether the Americans should compete. Finally, the U.S. Congress announced, "Sports has no place in politics," and the team was permitted to go to Germany.

Hitler decided to show his best face. Hilda's parents didn't take her to any of the events, but they took Eva. She was so excited when she arrived home. She has seen Jesse Owens run. He was a black man from the United States. In all, he won four gold medals. Jesse Owens' success was a terrible blow for the Nazis. They considered themselves to be the "Super Race." In their view, black men shouldn't even be allowed to exist.

Although Nazi flags flew throughout Berlin during the Olympics no arrests were made. For quite a while, Hitler had been rounding up and arresting Jews and Gentiles who spoke out against the Nazis, also Jewish community leaders, and powerful Jewish business men. Some were released after interrogation; some were not. All that stopped during the Olympics. It was as if Hitler and his supporters were trying to tell the world, "Nothing bad is happening here. It's all a big lie." And indeed, to visitors, Germany seemed peaceful.

One day, when Hilda was coming down the subway steps on her way home from school, she saw a large group of people heading towards her. There were always Nazi kids hanging around, trying to scare the other kids. Hilda was terrified and thought, "What do they want from me? They're going to kill me or something!" But they only wanted her autograph, Because of her dark skin, they thought she was an athlete from another country. She mumbled, "I'm just a visitor, here for the games." And then she ran all the way home. She never forgot how terrified she felt.

1936 to 1938 Goldschmidtschule

Hilda's new school, Goldschmidtschule, was founded by a woman named Doctor Goldschmidt. "Schule" means school. Located in a large villa in an area called Grünwald, beautiful grounds surrounded the school. It was like being out in the country. Although they were surrounded by danger, even on the first day, Hilda's parents allowed her to make the journey alone.

Hilda loved the school and felt that it was the most beautiful time in her childhood. All of the students were Jewish, and they, too, traveled long distances to reach their school. Some students boarded at the school, going home only for holidays.

Once in a while a teacher at Hilda's school, usually one of the men, disappeared. Everyone wondered what had happened to him. Jewish men were being picked up every day and sent to the camps. Sometimes they returned, but not often. Hilda became more and more aware that terrible things were occurring in Germany as people disappeared and rumors that Jews, cripples, the mentally retarded, and others, were being killed. Could it be true? It didn't seem possible in their beautiful homeland.

From 1934 onwards, Jewish children no longer had the Gentile friends they had when they were younger. Everything they did, they did with other Jewish children. Jewish schools had wonderful sports programs, and Goldschmidtschule was no exception. Hilda always ran track after school. Often Jewish schools competed each other. Since Hilda's last name was Anker, she always ran the anchor leg of the relay team.

For Hilda, it was like having two lives. She loved school and was always a good student, and the after-school track meets were great fun. But when the track meet ended, Hilda often had to travel home alone in the dark. The darkness was dangerous, But for Jews, so was everything else at that time. The first hour of each school day was spent studying the Jewish religion. Later in the day, the students learned French and English. As they got older, Latin and Greek were added to their program. The school believed in preparing its students well enough that should their families escape to England, the children would be able to pass the British matriculation exam at age eighteen. A pass meant admission to university.

It was difficult for a person of Hilda's age to study as much as she was expected to do. However, when she did get to England in 1939, she found that because of what she had learned at Goldschmidtschule, she was way ahead of the other students.

1936 to 1938 Changes

The Anchors often spent time with Hilda's father's first cousin, Gustav, and his family. He and his wife Emmy lived just two blocks away. Jewish families became extremely close at that time. it was important to stick together since family members would be the ones most likely to help you survive those dangerous times.

Gustav's brother, Hugo Haase, had been assassinated on the steps of the Reichstag (the parliament building) in 1919, right after WW1 ended. He was an important Social Democrat, a member of the Reichstag (Germany's governing body), the political party that later most strongly opposed Hitler. Anti-Jewish feeling had already begun in 1919, and it's possible that between the two wars they kept an eye on Hugo's family because of their political

connections. Suddenly, in November 1938, Gustav and his wife, Emmy, vanished. They were among the first people to be sent to what was being called a concentration camp. Others referred to them as death camps. The camps were for those who spoke out against the government or who didn't fit Hitler's image of the perfect German.

About six weeks after they were captured, Gustav and Emmy were released from the concentration camp. Emmy was a wonderful woman, always happy. Whenever she came to the Ankers' apartment she played with Hilda and her sisters. It was such a shock to see her when she returned from the camp. In her six weeks in captivity, her pitch-black hair had turned completely white. Gustav and Emmy told the Nazis that they would go to Vicky in France. They had to leave behind everything they owned. They felt sure that there, they would be free from persecution and danger.

Hitler and his followers planned to rid Germany of all its Jews by one method or another. In the two or three years before the war actually began, close to 170,000 Jews were allowed to leave the camps if they promised to get out of Germany. Those who left considered themselves most at risk: politicians, professionals, scientists, intellectuals such as Albert Einstein, and some Jewish families. This saved many lives.

Berlin was now so different from the Berlin of Hilda's wonderful childhood, when the worst thing that happened was an argument with a friend. Although her whole life had changed, school was still like an oasis - a safe, peaceful place where nothing bad ever happened. And then, when she left school, all of the problems hit her again.

For Hilda, even the walk to the train station each morning had become a terrifying ordeal. More and more gangs were being formed, and often gang members waited to ridicule Hilda, or push her down. Day after day she ran, terrified, her heart pounding until long after she was safely on the train. Once there, she had the company of other Jewish children on their way to the same school.

In 1938, two years after Hilda had first enrolled at the school, Hilda's sisters joined her at the school. They were no longer allowed to attend the state school. When Hilda reached age twelve, winter brought a new danger. Gang members made snowballs with rocks inside, often hitting Hilda or her sisters on the head. But at least, now, Hilda was no longer traveling to school alone.

Hilda's father was frequently absent from their home. Even her mother didn't know his whereabouts. Often they would hear that on a particular evening, many Jews were going to be picked up for seemingly no reason. Being "picked up" usually meant being sent to one of the camps. Jewish people had a network in those days, passing whatever news they hear onto

other Jews as quickly as possible. You never knew whose life you might save. Sometimes Hilda's father didn't come home for two days. It was very worrying for his family. They were always terrified that he had been arrested, and that they might never see him again. When he returned he refused to give an explanation of where he had been.

Hilda's mother had two sisters. One sister, Kathe, was married to a Gentile. She behaved as if she were no longer Jewish. Her husband had died, and she and her son, Günther, lived together. Günther wasn't considered to be Jewish, even though his mother was.

Günther, ten years older than Hilda, belonged to the Hitler Youth. In 1933, when Hitler came to power, Günther was eighteen and Hilda was just eight. Hitler Youths were a teenage army. Looking like Hitler's ideal German, tall, with blond hair and blue eyes and wearing beige shirts and dark shorts, they marched, stiff-legged, around Berlin. A swastika, Hitler's symbol, was worn on an arm band around one sleeve. For many citizens, they were a terrifying sight. No one knew if they would be plucked out of the crowd and arrested. By the time the war started in September 1939, Günther was in the German army.

Hilda's other aunt, Nanny, had two children, a girl and a boy. The girl, Ursel, wanted to be a teacher. She was the cousin accompanying Hilda when they ran away from the Nazis after refusing to salute. She was no longer allowed to attend school, and in late 1938, she wanted to emigrate to Palestine. Her boyfriend already lived there and she was anxious to follow him.

Since their grandmother didn't want the family to break up, she forbade Ursel to go. As a result, Ursel had a nervous breakdown. Hilda's family later learned that in 1941 Ursel was institutionalized. In 1943, the Gestapo sent her to Auschwitz. She was killed immediately.

Hitler's followers didn't try to help or cure anyone. To them Ursel was "imperfect" and therefore could not be allowed to live.

1938 **Kristallnacht**

On November 9, 1938, *Kristallnacht* began a whole new reign of terror for Jews. The name came from the amount of glass (*Kristall*) smashed on that night (*nacht*) not only in Berlin but in cities and towns throughout the country. Since Hitler controlled the radio stations and a curfew kept Jews at home, most Jews didn't know about it until the next morning. Compared with the horrors of that night, nothing much had happened up to that point. There was no longer any doubt about Hitler's hatred of the Jews.

On the morning of November 10, When Hilda and her sisters were on the metro going to school, they saw that the synagogue closest to their home was burning. At least a dozen other students and teachers were in the train compartment with Hilda. Everyone was upset. They asked each other, "What's going on?" But no one knew.

When they arrived at school, Doctor Goldschmidt explained what had happened and tried to calm them all down. "You can't stay here," she told Hilda. "You and your sisters need to go home immediately." And so they returned home.

When the girls reached their apartment, some of their relatives were there. Everyone was crying and hysterical. When Hilda's father arrived home, he told them what had happened. Jewish homes had been broken into. Pianos and furniture had been thrown through windows, then burned on the sidewalk on huge bonfires. Synagogues had been burned, and so had all of the Jewish stores.

On Kurfürstendamm, Berlin's main shopping street, the windows of every Jewish department store had been smashed, and the merchandise damaged or stolen. By some miracle, the Nazis had overlooked their father's business. It was unharmed.

No matter how difficult things became, Hilda's parents always managed to make their girls feel safe and secure. "We've already lived through a lot," they said. "We'll live through this. This will be all right, too." Then Hilda's dad said, "We're going to ride the street car. The girls never forgot what they saw that day. It was terrible, horrifying. From the streetcar they saw one store after another that had been badly damaged and looted. Shattered glass lay everywhere; people shouted anti-Jewish obscenities, celebrating this night of horror. The air was filled with the overpowering smell from the smashed perfume bottles. Instead of smelling nice, the perfume stank!

Horrifying as the scene was, Hilda felt glad that her father made them experience the events of *Kristallnacht*.. Mr. Anker told his girls, "I want you to remember what you have seen and the hatred against Jews you have experienced. Tell people about it." Perhaps he feared that he might not survive, but that his children, hopefully, would. Hilda was now twelve.

Hilda's father decided it was impossible for them to remain in Berlin. He hadn't realized how bad things had become. He had been a German officer in World War 1, and had always felt enormous pride in being German. His family had lived in Germany for many generations, and he couldn't imagine how this could happen in his beloved homeland. But he needed to turn his back on their past lives, their home, their possessions, and his business. It was the only choice, perhaps the only way to save their lives.

1938 For Jews Only

Near Hilda's home there was a Jewish Cultural Center. A great many Jewish musicians, no longer allowed to play in the state orchestra, formed their own symphony orchestra. Famous performers like Kurt Weil and Lotte Lenya also performed there. Hilda's parents felt she was too young to go to the theater, but her sister Dodi was allowed to go to the cabaret, and she told her sisters about it.

Jews who had always been assimilated (living and working with Gentiles in Germany's cities and towns), were suddenly living as if they were in ghettos. In a ghetto, most of the inhabitants are from the same race. At one time, many years ago, European Jews were required to live in one area of a city or town, a ghetto, as their ancestors had done, virtual prisoners because of their religious beliefs. The only difference now was that no wall surrounded them. Even though Hilda's home was still right where it had always been, she and her family could only buy from, and be friends with, other Jews.

The synagogue became extremely important. Some rabbis bravely spoke out against the Nazis, and became well known because of it, but in doing so, they put themselves in enormous danger. Although Hilda's family had always attended a synagogue in the past, now they attended more frequently. It was a place where they felt safe and protected, a place where everyone else was enduring the same problems, anxieties, and tragedies. It was a place where news and information could safely be shared. And it was a place to unite and pray.

Spring 1939 Preparing to Leave Germany

In Berlin, in the spring of 1939, more and more people were being picked up by the Nazis every day, but Hilda's father never showed how worried he was. He always made his family feel protected and safe. After two of Hilda's teenage cousins went to Palestine, Hilda's sister, Dodi, wanted to go, too. Their father said, "No. We stay together."

Hilda's father was a citizen of the city of Danzig (today, a Polish city known as Gdansk). Located on the border between Poland and Germany, Danzig was a self-governing "free city," much like a separate country. Citizens of Danzig had their own passports rather than German passports. Because of their connection with Danzig, Hilda's family did not have "J" for *Juden*, Jew, in their passports as other Jews did, something which most probably saved their lives.

Hilda's four uncles lived in Danzig. They saw what was happening in Germany and decided to sell their business. Their parents had died and they

had been running the business ever since. Three of them emigrated to the United States, and one took his family to England.

When his brothers left, Hilda's father realized that perhaps, in order to survive, he and his family were going to have to leave as well. At that time, the government was allowing German residents to ship their belongings out of the country if they planned to leave permanently. However, no money could leave the country.

Hilda's father needed to get his art objects and household goods out of Germany. He obtained some huge containers, then bought three expensive Leica cameras, and other valuable items. His idea was that if he reached the United States, he could raise money by selling them.

While Hilda's parents packed the things they valued most, a Nazi soldier sat in the room with them. "You're supposed to have only one camera," he said. You can't pack more than one!" The soldier's job was to prevent people from packing jewelry, gold, or other valuables. Once in a while, Hilda's father and mother would give the soldier a little money, a bribe. In exchange he allowed them to pack things they weren't really permitted to take. This was dangerous. The Ankers could have been arrested for bribing a Nazi official, and the soldier could have been in a lot of trouble.

Hilda's parents were fortunate in being able to ship a large amount of their belongings out of Germany. Many people left with nothing. Although Hilda's family was Jewish, and terrible things were happening around them, being citizens of Danzig protected them, especially from the Nuremberg Laws.

1939 **Kindertransport**

One of Hilda's uncles had bought a farm in England and settled there. He agreed to sponsor Hilda and her two sisters if they came to England. Hilda was thirteen, Dodi, fifteen, and Eva, seventeen. It was June, 1939. The war started in September of that year.

When Hilda and her sisters finally got passes to leave for England, they were told they could take only one suitcase each. Hilda's mother bought new clothes for each of them. It was nice to have nothing but new things. They packed as much as possible in each suitcase. Eva, the eldest, was told she had to carry Hilda's suitcase since Hilda might not be strong enough. She was made responsible for getting the girls to England safely.

Before they left Berlin, Mr. Anker took the three girls to visit his clothing manufacturing business. None of his employees were Jewish. Hilda's father got everyone's attention then said, "See what you did! These children have to leave Germany because of you!" Two months later Mr. Anker's assistant took

over the business. Hilda's father left with nothing. He had already walked away from the apartment building that they owned.

Once all of their treasures had been packed and shipped, their apartment no longer felt like home. And since the girls were leaving for England, their parents no longer needed such a big place. They moved into a small apartment, hoping it would some day be possible for them to join their girls in England.

Hilda and her sisters found it heartbreaking to say goodbye to their grandmother. In her mind, Hilda can still see her grandmother hugging them, each of them knowing it was most probably the last time they'd see each other. They also said goodbye to their aunt, a widow, and hugged and kissed all of the other relatives who lived nearby. No one knew what the future would bring, or what would happen to any of them.

The girls were to travel with other Jewish children on a special train called a Kindertransport. *"Kinder"* means "children." Hilda's parents were told they could say goodbye to their children at the station, but they could not go onto the railway platform with them. As the parents stood on a bridge that crossed the railroad tracks, they looked down on the heads of children they might never see again.

Some of the children were only two or three years old. If they could walk, and they had a sponsor, they were allowed to go. The oldest was seventeen. Hilda was thirteen. Each of them struggled with a huge suitcase. Even the oldest child didn't really understand what was happening.

Hilda never forgot that scene - the parents up above, and the children below, each of them trying to say goodbye. Little children screamed and screamed, and the older children and their parents sobbed, some without making a sound. It was complete chaos.

The Kindertransport held about 200 children. Some children thought the train ride was fun. They really didn't understand why their parents had cried when they left. They laughed and played together as if they were going on a holiday, or on a day's excursion somewhere. Hilda's parents heard later that one father hung onto the back of the train and stayed there all the way to Bremerhaven. From there the children would travel to England by ship. No one knew the man was there. He wanted to see for himself that his child really did leave Germany safely.

The children were accompanied by young German-Jewish men of twenty or twenty-one, members of a Jewish organization. They were only allowed to stay in England for two or three days; then they had to return to Berlin. Once there, they escorted another group of children on the next Kindertransport, and the next. Had the young men stayed in England, they would have brought the whole escape movement to a halt. Part of the

agreement between governments was that the young escorts must return to Germany or Poland, wherever they had started their journey. Had they realized what the future would hold for them, many wouldn't have wanted to return, but all of them honored the agreement.

When the Kindertransport reached the German seaport of Bremerhaven, Nazi soldiers examined each suitcase. No one was allowed to take jewelry - or anything of value - out of Germany. If anything valuable were found, the soldiers confiscated it.

When Hilda and her sisters opened their suitcases, the Nazi soldiers went through them, throwing the contents all over the train compartment. Since no one could take any money, parents had packed each suitcase with as many clothes as possible. When the soldiers left, all of the children, many of them very young, tried to repack their suitcases. It was impossible to fit everything back in. Even though they tried helping each other, lots of things were left out, or put into the wrong case.

From Bremerhaven, the children traveled across the English Channel by boat. Once they reached England, they were safe. In all, 10,000 Jewish children were saved by the Kindertransport. Sadly, very few Polish children were able to be rescued.

Two of their older cousins met Hilda and her sisters' ship when it reached England. Together they traveled on to London by train. Hilda's uncle had a home in London. On the farm that he also owned, teenagers were being trained as farmers to prepare them for going to Palestine. He took the three girls to his farm, but he really didn't know what to do with them. However, he had agreed to be responsible for them.

1939 Boarding School

In England, soon after their arrival, Hilda and her sister Dodi were sent to a boarding school in Broadstairs, a coastal town near Canterbury, east of London. Eva, the eldest girl, went to work at a small farm owned by a vicar (a minister). His vicarage was next to the farm. Eva learned to milk his cow, feed the horse and chickens, and harvest the apples. Although she was only seventeen, they didn't allow her to go to school.

Hilda knew very little English, but one of her German cousins attended the same boarding school. That was nice for them both. At night, they had beds next to each other, but they were told to speak only English, no German.

Hilda's cousin always did what was expected of her, so she refused to talk to Hilda in German, even when Hilda said in German, "I don't know how to speak English." But somehow they got along. Many years later Hilda realized

that not being allowed to speak her own language was a good way to learn the new language.

Rules were strict at the boarding school. The food tasted and looked terrible, but the students had to eat it all. Hilda and Dodi ate white bread for the first time in their lives. In Germany, only brown bread was available. Breakfast was oatmeal. They had always liked oatmeal, but at the boarding school, no milk was served with it. And if you didn't finish a meal, you weren't allowed to send a letter home. So Hilda and her sister came up with a plan. Every morning they put the sticky oatmeal in their pockets; later they flushed it down the toilet. Fortunately they were never caught, so they were always allowed to write home.

Gas masks were provided at the boarding school as they were all British school schools. The British government feared that German bombers would drop gas bombs as they had in WW1. The masks would provide protection against poisonous gas fumes. Since there weren't enough gas masks for every child at the school, refugees like Hilda and Dodi did not receive one. Suddenly, the refugees were no longer Jews in need of protection. They were Germans - "the enemy." The other schoolchildren treated them as if they were spies. Hilda and Dodi had thought that once they reached England they were safe from persecution. Now the nightmare had begun again.

September 1939

Hilda's Parents Escape

In Berlin survival became more difficult for Hilda's parents each passing day. Leaving the house for supplies was a terrifying ordeal. Insults increased, as did the danger. Posters proclaimed that Jews were "vermin" or referred to them as "poisonous mushrooms." How could anyone survive such humiliation? Increasing numbers of Jews disappeared or were beaten in the streets as an example to other Jews. It was time to leave. But how? Located around the corner from the Anker's apartment was a police station. One morning in late August the man in charge came to see Hilda's father. He was a good man. He brought shocking news. "We have it on record that tomorrow you and your wife are to be picked up and set to Auschwitz or some other internment camp. If you can, get out!"

Hilda's father went immediately to the airport. He still had his Danzig passport. At the airport he said, "I'll take any flight that will get me out of Germany. He was extremely fortunate. The ticket clerk sold him two tickets to Denmark. Mr. Anker first told his friend the judge that they were leaving. He also said goodbye to the girls' grandmother. She had refused to leave. Would they ever see her alive again? It was September 1, 1939, the day that Germany invaded Poland.

Without his wife's knowledge, the judge took Hilda's parents to the metro station, saying goodbye to them there. He had been a wonderful friend and neighbor to them for many years. After *Kristallnacht*, it had been extremely dangerous for him to continue his friendship with the Anchors. And yet he did. His was just one of many families where family members no longer trusted each other.

Hilda's parents took a train from the metro station to the airport. When they went through immigration, even though their Danzig passports did not say *Jude* (Jew), they were asked if they were Jewish. Hilda's dad was dark-skinned like Hilda, but he said, "No." They asked Hilda's mother, too. She was much lighter-skinned and had blue eyes. She also said, "No." But the danger wasn't over yet. To make sure that the Anchors had no hidden money, jewels, or weapons, Nazi soldiers did a thorough body search in addition to searching their luggage. Eventually, when the soldiers found nothing of value, Mr. and Mrs. Anker were allowed to board the plane.

Just two days later, at 11 am on September 3, 1939, Britain's Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, declared war on Germany. Hitler's armies had already invaded both Hungary and Czechoslovakia. When Chamberlain issued an ultimatum for Hitler to withdraw his troops, Hitler ignored the warning. He had been preparing for war since 1932.

For the first two months of the war, Hilda's parents lived quietly in Denmark. They didn't speak Danish, and were unable to get work permits. They lived on whatever money Mr. Anker's brother in England was able to send them. After a while, they traveled on to England.

How wonderful it felt for Mr. and Mrs. Anker when they reached England and were reunited with their beloved girls. They had never thought it would happen. They wanted to remove Hilda and Dodi from the boarding school immediately, but for a while it wasn't possible. The apartment they had rented in London was too small for the girls to join them there.

Eva continued to work on the vicar's farm, but Hilda's dad was still dependent on his brother for whatever they needed for daily living. His brother had left Germany early enough that he had been able to get most of his money out of Germany. Since all their possessions were waiting for them in California where another brother was now living, Hilda's parents began applying to get visas for the United States.

1940

The Blitz

After six months at the boarding school, Hilda and Dodi moved to London and lived with their parents. But they hadn't been there long before, on June 18, 1940, the Germans began nightly bombing raids on London.

Londoners referred to the raids as “The Blitz” after the German word *Blitzkrieg*, or “lightning war.” The air raids were terrifying. The city of London appeared to be on fire night after night. Everyone was ordered to find safety in a bomb shelter, or in one of the underground railway stations.

Whenever the air raid siren screamed through the night air, and their landlady urged them to go to the safety of an air raid shelter, Hilda’s father said, “This family is not going to an air raid shelter.” Mr. Anker was convinced that since they had endured so much already, Hitler was not going to get them now. They lived in a two-story house with a basement. Hilda’s family lived on the first floor and their landlady on the second. As bombs fell all around them, the Ankers stood on the flat roof of their building, daring Hitler to hurt them. From there, it looked as if all of London was burning. It was a horrifying sight.

But Hilda’s parents were also realistic. The incessant bombing had made the city a dangerous place to be. They needed to get their daughters out of London again. Since before the outbreak of war, English children, known as “Evacuees,” had been leaving London for the safety of the countryside. Hundreds of them left every day.

Summer & Autumn, 1940 Life in a Christian Home

In order to get their daughters away from the bombing, the Ankers sent them to stay on the tiny farm where their older sister Eva was living and working. The farm, owned by a Christian minister, a vicar, was in the countryside in Kirdford, Sussex, half way between London and England’s south coast. It was fun being with Eva again, but Hilda had to adjust to yet another new school. This time it was a one-room village school. During their months in London, they had gone to a small private school briefly. Since they were German, no school wanted to admit them.

Hilda and her sister Dodi also had to adjust to being Jewish children living in a Christian home. On Sundays they often went to the Christian church. The vicar never forced them to go, but they were intelligent girls, curious about the service. The vicar was a kind, understanding man. He knew that they had been forced to participate in daily Christian prayers at the boarding school, and he realized how confusing it must have been for them. He also realized that at times they must feel as if they were no longer Jewish. And having left Germany because they were Jewish, it was a time when they wanted, and needed, to celebrate being Jewish. The vicar tried to support them in every way he could.

On Sundays, the collection plate was passed around during the service. Hilda and Dodi had no money to contribute. They didn’t want to be different from the other people in the church, so they each tore a button off their

sweaters and put them on the collection plate. The buttons sounded like coins. No one ever caught them, and the vicar whose care they were in, never realized where the buttons came from, or why they were there.

London became more and more dangerous. Every day Hilda's father went to the American consulate to ask for visas for his family. Unfortunately, the quota system only permitted a certain number of people to emigrate each year, and in spite of the war, and the turmoil in Europe, the United States government was not willing to increase the quota. The quota was small when compared to the number of people who wanted to leave. Several months passed before five visas were granted and the girls left the farm.

October 1940 **America**

In October 1940, the Ankers left England on a small cargo ship. Most of the space on board was taken up by cargo holds, so it had very few cabins. A convoy of perhaps sixty-five ships traveled to the United States together. Although there were naval destroyers and airplanes to protect the civilian ships, it was a dangerous journey.

There was a lifeboat drill as soon as they boarded ship. Hilda's father stood at one lifeboat station, Hilda at another station, and her mother and her two sisters at other stations. If the ship were torpedoed, there was a chance that at least one of them would survive.

Sometimes German U-boats penetrated the circle of naval ships, coming so dangerously close to them that the Ankers could see their conning towers. They thanked God when the U-boats passed by without harming them. Perhaps the German sailors thought that a cargo ship en route to America was not worth destroying. However, many of the other ships in the convoy were sunk.

Also on board with the Ankers were the crew and sixty English children. These children had set off for Canada first, but their ship had been torpedoed. The children were rescued from the icy gray Atlantic Ocean. They were English children whose parents were desperate to get them to safety. It took a lot of courage for the parents to put their children on a ship a second time. They had almost lost them once. For the children, the journey must have been a terrifying ordeal after what they had already experienced.

The Ankers first port of call was Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Canada's east coast. From there they continued on to Boston. Members of a Jewish organization met them and they were informed that they would be divided between several homes until they could travel on to Beverly Hills where the uncles were living. Hilda's father said firmly, "We're not going to be separated again." Although he understood that it would be hard to find a home willing to

take five people, Hilda' father wouldn't change his mind. He couldn't bear to lose sight of his girls again, not even for a night or two.

Since the organization had nowhere else to place them, Mr. Ankers rented rooms at a small hotel. They were awful, and, although the girls were bitten badly by bedbugs, their father wouldn't let them leave. But none of this changed how the girls felt about their dad. They knew that, even then, he only wanted the best for them. After the horrors of Germany, he felt that being together was more important than anything else.

Mr. Anker told his family they would travel by bus. "Since we have to cross the United States to get to California, you're going to see something of the countryside," he said. Coming right after the two weeks they had spent on the ship, although they found the countryside interesting, the journey exhausted them.

When they boarded the bus in Boston, other passengers asked the girls where they were going. The ocean journey had left them looking tired and bedraggled, and they hadn't eaten very well. Their fellow travelers must have been surprised when the girls said they were going to Beverly Hills. The girls had no idea, then, how luxurious it would be!

The Greyhound bus went from one little town to the next. They traveled from Boston to Niagara Falls, and then on to Chicago. They had friends there. As they continued on through Colorado and the Rockies, they never stayed in a hotel - there was no money for that - so they were on the bus day and night. Looking back on it, they had a good time, but it was a hard way to reach their new home. When they finally reached the end of their journey, the girls were met at the bus station by their uncles. Getting off the bus after that long journey felt wonderful. And their arrival in California was the start of a new adventure, a new beginning, a new life.

November 1940 onwards A New Life in California

When Hilda first arrived in California, she and her sister, Eva, lived with one of their uncles in Beverly Hills; her parents and Dodi stayed with another uncle. Eva soon became a live-in nanny for a family in Beverly Hills, so although Hilda attended Beverly Hills High School for one semester, Eva's schooling ended in Germany.

Hilda found it difficult to relate to the other girls at the High School. The girls in her class thought mainly about clothes, and whether the items they wore matched each other. Hilda had come from war-torn Europe and no one she met seemed to know anything about the war, nor did they want to know anything about it. But on the sports field, Hilda felt truly accepted. She had

always done well at all sports. When teams were being formed she was always selected first.

After a while, using money that his brothers gave him, Hilda's dad bought a small piece of farmland in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley. They rented a house next to the parcel of land, then later purchased one situated on the street immediately in front of their land. At the time they left Germany, the brothers were legally allowed to take with them the money from the sale of their father's grain business. Although he had not worked with them but had started his own business, as the fifth son, Hilda's father was entitled to his share.

Hilda's dad used the land for a chicken farm. It wasn't necessary to speak English in order to be chicken farmer but it was a difficult life. The family's problems were not over. Physically, Hilda's parents worked incredibly hard to make a living. When Hilda transferred to Van Nuys High School, she was again accepted on the sports field but not socially. None of her classmates lived on a chicken farm.

The Ankers' farm stretched back to the street behind them. In addition to chickens, they had fruit trees, a cow, and a "Victory Garden" in which they grew vegetables. At that time all American families were being encouraged to start Victory Gardens just as they were doing in Great Britain. Hilda parents' gathered the eggs in the mornings, but in the evenings, feeding the chickens and egg-gathering were Hilda's responsibility. On weekends she worked side-by side with her father. And as they worked, they talked. Often her father told her things she'd never known about the years when Germany was preparing for war

Every day the Ankers scoured the newspaper for news of the war in Europe. They wished that America would join in the war, but for a long time it didn't seem as if that would happen. They wondered and worried about the much-loved family members they had left behind and felt guilty for being safe in America. Leaving the children's grandmother behind had broken their hearts.

Since other German refugees lived nearby, there was plenty of socializing in addition to the hard work. Many families were as educated and cultured as the Ankers, but, like the Ankers, they were now doing jobs very different from those they'd had in Germany. Since she could speak to them in German it meant that Hilda's mother never really needed to learn English. And because of her limited English, she never joined the P.T.O. at Hilda's school, making it difficult for Hilda to be fully accepted by her peers.

In their new home, the family still spoke German, although the girls and their dad were fairly fluent in English by then. A man from the Agriculture Department visited the Ankers once a week to teach Hilda's dad how to best

run the farm. At Thanksgiving he brought them a pumpkin pie because they'd never eaten one. They appreciated the thoughtful gesture but Hilda's dad thought that the pie tasted like soap.

After Hilda and her family had lived in the safety of California for a while, her father began talking more and more about the days and weeks immediately before the war. At that time he was frequently absent from their home, but although they wondered where he went, none of them had ever asked him for an explanation. Not even the girls' mother knew where he was. They were always terrified that he had been arrested and they might never see him again.

But the time had come for an explanation. It seemed that while he was missing from home, Hilda's dad often rode the subway for hours, sometimes throughout the night. Or he sat on a park bench for hours and hours deep in thought. He was so involved in worrying about his family's safety, he didn't even think about how worried they might be by his absences. He no longer trusted anyone who was not Jewish, not even the manager of his manufacturing company. He was a nice man but not a Jew.

The 1940's School Days

Hilda, an excellent student, was still very much involved with sports. She joined the G.A.A. (Girls' Athletic Association) and the after-school athletic team as well as the volleyball, baseball, and tennis teams. Sports made her feel good, particularly since she continued to be chosen first for each of the teams.

When the family had moved from Beverly Hills to Van Nuys, Hilda soon discovered that there were no other Jewish students at the High School. And, in spite of her success at sports, Hilda still didn't feel accepted by the other girls. At home, she began taking piano lessons again, something she hadn't done since Berlin. Her teacher was a chicken farmer's daughter. In the evenings, and on weekends, she continued to work on the farm. Hilda began writing for the school newspaper. One teacher took a special interest in her, encouraging her to attend university when she graduated from High School the following year. Meanwhile, Hilda tried to fit into the American culture.

Often, Hilda and a group of girls took the streetcar and went dancing at the Palladium, a famous dance hall in Hollywood. Lots of G.I.'s attended the dances. All wore their military uniforms. Since they were several years older than the girls, it seemed very exciting. One of the girls' mothers always acted as a chaperone, making sure they all behaved themselves. They heard all the

famous bands of the day, bands such as those of Tommy Dorsey, and Glen Miller.

In December of 1941, the Japanese attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Overnight, the United States was drawn into a war with Japan. Germany and Italy then declared war on the United States. With the United States and Japan now involved, it had truly become a "World War." For Hilda and her family, America's involvement gave them hope that the war might end soon. With the greatly increased manpower fighting in Europe, perhaps some of their relatives would survive.

1945

The War in Europe

As the war news became more encouraging and it even seemed possible that the war might end, Hilda and her family wondered more and more about their lost relatives. They felt sure that few, if any, had survived. With America now fully involved in the war, the people that Hilda attended university with had a more personal interest in what was going on in Europe. Many of the girls had brothers and boyfriends fighting overseas, but none of them could possibly imagine what Hilda and her relatives had experienced. In that regard, she still felt alone.

As soon as the war ended, Hilda's family contacted the American Red Cross. The Red Cross had undertaken the enormous task of reuniting relatives who had survived, or informing family members of those who had died. Little by little they began to learn the fate of those who had been left behind. But for the Ankers, there was no news as yet.

Although the Ankers were far from rich in their new home in America, at least they were safe and far away from the horror suffered by the Jews who had remained in Germany. Their joy at hearing that the war was over was tinged with deep sorrow. The news from Europe was bad. In all, over six million Jews had died in the gas chambers in addition to six-and-a-half million "imperfect" Jews and Gentiles. Hilda's mentally unstable cousin, Ursel, was one of them.

1945

News from Overseas and a Reunion

Quite unexpectedly, sad news reached the Ankers. They had adjusted to life in California and in spite of daily newspaper reports, Europe, and the war, seemed very far away. In 1944, the authorities had realized that Aunt Kathe, Günther's mother, was Jewish. The fact that she had converted to Christianity before the war was not taken into consideration. She was arrested and sent to Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia.

Hilda's father's first cousin, Gustav, and his wife Emmy, had spent most of the war years in Vicky, France. After spending six weeks in a concentration camp before the war, they were allowed to leave Germany, but had to leave everything behind. In 1944, while they were living in France, they were arrested again. This time they were taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau, one of the most terrible of the concentration camps. They did not survive.

It wasn't until some time after the war that Hilda traveled to Germany and got more definite information about the loved ones she'd left behind - her cousins, aunts, uncles, and her beloved grandmother.

In Berlin, she met with her cousin Günther. Although he had been a Hitler Youth, as a man with one Jewish parent, he had spent the last part of the war in a slave labor camp. After the war, he lived in Munich in southern Germany until he died there in June, 1999.

In July, 1942, when Günther was visiting their grandmother (Hilda's mother's mother), the Gestapo came to arrest her. She was very calm. She didn't cry or become hysterical. At that time, no one knew with certainty the horrors that were in store for them.

Every day Günther took food to the Jewish Center where the prisoners were being held. Although his grandmother was being fed, Günther took her better food. She never lost her composure. A very proud woman, she didn't want to show her feelings.

From the Jewish Center, Günther's grandmother and Hilda's Aunt Nanny were sent to Theresienstadt. That November, Hilda's grandmother died of a heart attack. She was seventy-five. Two years later, in 1944, Kathe, Nanny's sister, was also sent to Theresienstadt. When Aunt Nanny was transferred to Auschwitz, she died. She had tried to get Kathe to accompany her. Fortunately Kathe refused, her refusal saving her life.

Many family members had died, but, thanks to people like their friend and neighbor, the judge, the policeman who had urged Hilda's parents to leave just in time to save their lives, the Kindertransport organization, and the relatives who had also helped, Hilda and her family had survived.

HILDA

Hilda in 1935, age nine.



Hilda on the first day of kindergarten. She is holding the traditional cornucopia filled with treats, a *zuchertütte*.

HILDA



Hilda age five, 1931

1933 - Hilda at age seven
taking a dancing lesson



HILDA



Hilda's home at 17 Klopstock Strasse. She and her family lived on the first floor of the building, the judge lived on the third floor; the ground floor was used as a beer parlor.

Summer vacation on the Baltic Sea. Eva is second from the left, Hilda is fourth from the left, and Dodi is on the far right. 1929. Hilda is four. Behind them are two wicker beach chairs.



HILDA

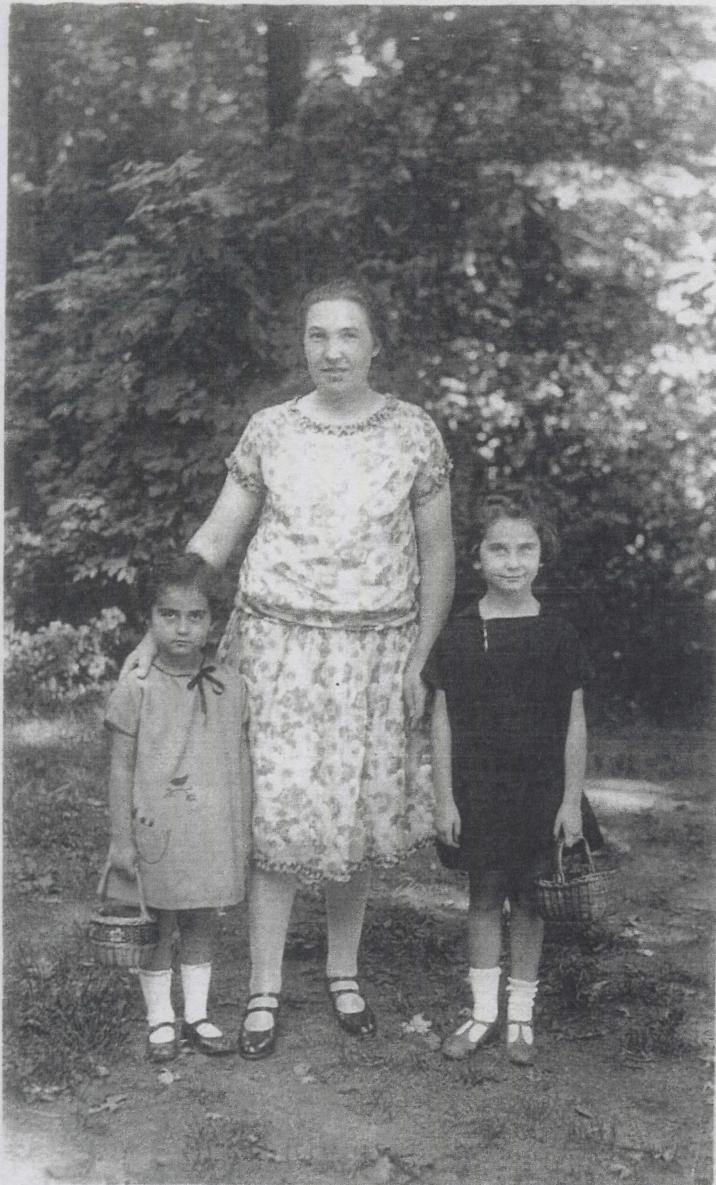


Hilda in her elementary school classroom when she was six years old. Hilda is the tallest of the three girls standing in front of the windows on the right. 1932.



Summer vacation, 1935, at Rauchfangswerder, a Berlin suburb. Hilda is seated second from the right. Her mother is on the top of the stairs on the far left with Hilda's sisters, Eva and then Dodi seated to her right. The others in the photographs are cousins, their maid, and in the center, Aunt Trude, her father's sister.

HILDA

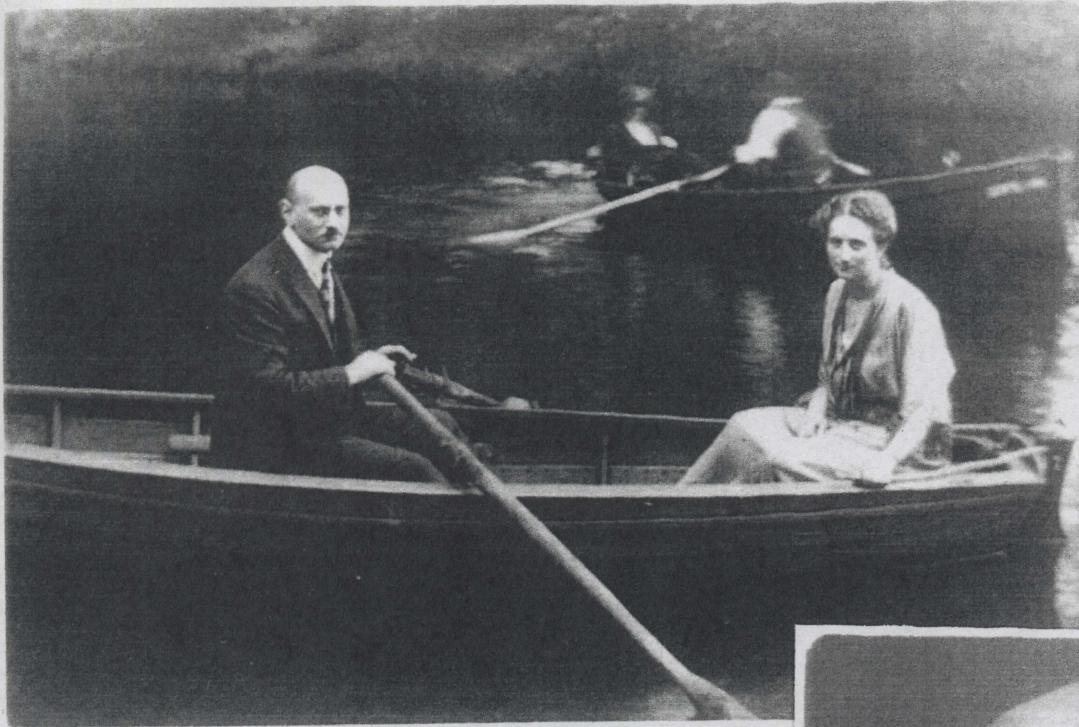


Hilda's sisters: Dodi is on the left, age four, Eva is on the right, age 6. Their maid in the center. They are visiting the Tiergarten, a large, park with a lagoon situated in the center of Berlin.

Hilda's passport photograph in 1939. she was thirteen.



HILDA



Hilda's parents in 1932



Hilda's parents in 1939



Hilda's father, 1935

PART TWO PAT

Growing up in Wartime England

December 1932 to 1935 Changes

When they got married, Leslie and May Drummond lived in Catford, a suburb of London, Great Britain's capital city. They shared a home with Leslie's parents for the first few years of their marriage. Everyone was delighted when, on August 31, 1933, Anthony was born. The Drummonds loved Tony dearly and hoped that before long there would be a second baby, a companion for their son.

When Tony was almost one, the Drummonds learned that May expected a second baby. Since they were the first of the young people in their families to get married there was great excitement over the news. Both Mrs. Drummond and her husband could hardly wait for the baby to be born. They didn't mind whether their second child was a boy or a girl, but Leslie secretly hoped that their next child would be a girl. They had always said that if they had a son he would be Anthony; a girl would be Patricia. The Drummonds ran a hairdressing salon, and soon after Tony was born, they purchased a house about ten minutes away from the business. They felt the time had come for their small family to have its own home.

On January 22, 1935, Patricia was born in a small, private nursing home run by two nurses. When the baby was taken home, Tony, age 1 1/2, was fascinated by his baby sister. He took his duties as big brother seriously and even began walking as soon as Pat arrived home. Leslie Drummond was delighted to have a daughter. He had so wanted both a boy and a girl. Their happiness, and their family, was complete.

It wasn't long before they became the owners of the business where they both worked. Men's hairdressing was done on the ground floor of the building, and ladies' hairdressing on the second floor. May helped her husband by doing the accounts and washing the towels. It was hard work, but it was a business they both enjoyed.

1935 to 1938 Early Childhood

Tony and Pat were as close as it is possible for a brother and sister to be, and when they both started talking they became even closer. Since they were close in age and no other children lived nearby, they did everything together. They had no cousins. There were no other small children in the family. While May and Leslie took care of the business, the two small children

happily played their own imaginative games together. The customers who came into the hairdressing salon, loved playing with them, too, and watching them as they grew taller.

Rumors were reaching England about the trouble brewing in Germany. It was difficult to take the rumors seriously. For the Drummonds, life followed the same routines of work, playing with the children, and excursions to the park on Sundays. Although war seemed possible, in England nothing had actually changed.

In September 1938 Tony started school. Since they were inseparable, it was a lonely time for Pat. Suddenly the house seemed so silent. Pat's parents realized how much she missed Tony and gave her lots of attention, but they had their business to take care of, too. So that she would have other three-year-olds to play with, Leslie and May Drummond sent Pat to a nursery school that was attached to the school Tony was attending.

Leslie and Pat Drummond were also worried about the news that they were hearing from Europe. It sounded more and more as if war were imminent. Germany had been building its army since their leader, Adolph Hitler, had come into power in 1933, and disturbing news was reaching England.

In England, a volunteer group known as the Air Raid Patrol (known as the A.R.P.) had been formed. Everyone had been issued a gas mask so that if Germany declared war on Great Britain and bombing raids began, its civilians would be capable of surviving a gas bomb attack.

In London, where the Drummonds lived, two million people were told to be prepared to leave the city. Factories in the Great Britain's industrial cities were already making armaments such as fighter planes, bombs, tanks, and jeeps. The Drummonds, like every other family in Great Britain, were thinking of little else but how suddenly their lives would change in the event of war. They must prepare but what should they do? And how would they keep their children safe?

1939 The Coming War

For a whole year, all the people of Great Britain could talk about was the possibility of war. Then in 1939, Hitler's troops invaded first Czechoslovakia and then Poland. In the event of war, London would be a primary target for Hitler's air force. The radio and newspapers were filled with news of the impending war, "The Gathering Storm," as Sir Winston Churchill later referred to it.

Like every other parent living in London, Pat's parents were worried. Every customer that came into their hairdressing business spoke of the

dangers ahead for all of them, particularly for those who lived in England's highly populated or industrial cities like London. More and more often the Drummonds heard the word "evacuation." The government was recommending that families in London and Birmingham, a city in the heart of the Industrial Midlands, should send their children to the safety of the countryside. Like every other family the Drummonds discussed the possibility of evacuating their children, but they had no friends living in the country, and didn't want to send their children to live with strangers.

Families began digging deep holes in their back gardens. Anderson Shelters, large concrete boxes with corrugated iron roofs were lowered into the holes. Although they had seats inside, these air raid shelters were cold and damp, and everyone hoped they would never have to be used. In some parks, deep trenches were dug and covered with sheets of corrugated iron. They would also serve as bomb shelters. Those who lived closer to the center of London would use the underground railway stations as shelters.

Pat and her family didn't need an Anderson Shelter. They had a large cellar under the hairdressing business. They were allowed to keep a tiny area of the cellar, and the rest was blocked off, then extended out under the sidewalk for use as a public shelter. It was one of three large shelters in the area. Each shelter contained benches, and when, a year later, the heavy bombing of London began, many families, including the Drummonds, often sheltered and slept there throughout the long, dangerous nights.

1939 War is Declared

Pat was 4 1/2 years old when Great Britain declared war on Germany. Tony had celebrated his birthday just three days earlier. For a long time, there had been problems in Europe. Germany had first invaded Czechoslovakia and then Poland. The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, had told Adolph Hitler, the German leader, that if Germany didn't pull out of Poland by 11 a.m. on September 3rd., Great Britain would declare war.

For Pat and her brother Tony nothing seemed to have changed. They still played together whenever possible, enjoying the hot, dry summer weather which seemed to go on and on that year. Tony had already attended school for two years, but Pat, a year-and-a-half younger than Tony, had been to nursery school for only the past year. In a few days, school would begin again for them both.

Once the school term began, when they weren't at school, or playing in the garden, Pat and Tony became increasingly aware that something was wrong. Whenever the children went into the hairdressing shop, everyone seemed so serious. Conversations were held in quiet voices. Often people

stopped talking when they saw the children. No one wanted the children to realize how worried they all were.

Mr. and Mrs. Drummond were becoming extremely worried about the situation in Europe. Although, in England, there were no signs yet that the country was at war, the government knew that sooner or later Hitler would bomb England. Many people feared that the Germans would invade England, too. They were already invading country after country in Europe. London, England's capital city, was the closest large city to Germany.

Everyone had been issued a gas mask and the government had been asking families to get their children out of London as quickly as possible. Many had gone already. In fact, between June 1939 the first week of the war in September 1939, three and a half million people had moved from the cities to country towns and villages. They were mostly children, but there were mothers with babies.

Pat's parents were like many others Londoners. They loved their children, but wanted them to be safe. Since there had been no bombing, it was difficult to take the danger seriously. The situation on the continent of Europe grew worse and worse, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (the B.B.C.) was broadcasting news bulletins continuously. Now, there was only one radio station and no more music. Hearing nothing but war news made everyone very anxious.

Posters with slogans like CHILDREN ARE SAFER IN THE COUNTRY and MOTHERS, SEND THEM OUT OF LONDON appeared everywhere. The posters urged parents to get their children out of the city as quickly as possible. School children wore their gas masks for a while every day, so that they would get used to wearing them. It was feared that the Germans would drop poisonous gas bombs. The gas masks would save the children's lives. Children were being sent all over England by bus and train. Many parents had no idea where their children were going until they received a letter from the new family several days later. Few people had telephones in those days, so parents had a very anxious few days until they received word of their children's whereabouts.

Some brothers and sisters were accidentally sent to different homes, or even different towns. If a family had relatives or friends in the country who were willing to take their children, then that was a much better solution. Some children were even sent as far away as Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa. Most of these children didn't return home for six years. They and their parents were strangers when they returned. Their parents barely knew them.

For the Drummonds, life was an agony of indecision. Like all parents, the safety of their children was of utmost importance. But they loved their

children and didn't want to be parted from them. And for the time being, they didn't seem to be in any real danger. No bombs had been dropped and life seemed to continue fairly normally with the routines of school for the children, and the business to run for their parents. For the time being, the Drummonds decided to keep the children with them in London.

Leslie Drummond joined the Auxiliary Fire Service when war was declared. They rented out their house and moved into the two floors above the business. The shop would only be open on the days when Pat's dad was not required to work for the Fire Service. He did not become a soldier. Hairdressing was considered to be a necessary service.

The government was convinced that sooner or later London would be heavily bombed. And because of the fear of bombing, or a German invasion, they advised pet owners to have their pets put down. They didn't want the additional problem of hundreds of homeless dogs roaming the streets. And so the Drummonds' beloved little black dog, Wendy, was put to sleep.

Summer 1940

Evacuation

On June 18, 1940, the Nazis began nightly bombing raids on London. The raids made even the outskirts of the city an extremely dangerous place to be. As the weeks passed, the bombing raids became heavier and heavier, and more and more frequent. Buildings were destroyed all over the city, and a great many people were killed. Night after night the air raid sirens screamed across London. And night after night Londoners ran to find safety in air raid shelters and underground railway stations.

By July 1940, every country in Europe that had been a friend or ally of Great Britain was occupied by German soldiers. Britain was fighting the war alone. The Drummond realized that if their children were to be safe, they had to send them out of London.

Before the war, friends of Pat's parents had spent a paying holiday on a farm in Cornwall, a county in the far western corner of England. They had decided to send their sixteen year-old daughter, Shirley, there. They asked the Drummonds if they would consider sending Pat and Tony to the farm, too. Since they had already decided that they had to get their children out of London, this seemed like a good solution. And so the three children set off on the long train journey to Cornwall. It was late summer, 1940.

Pat, Tony, and Shirley's parents said goodbye to them at their school. Many other students were also leaving for the west of England that morning. Brownhill Road School was on the opposite side of the street from Pat and Tony's home. Tony and Pat both went to school there. From Catford, teachers took the school children by bus to Paddington Station in central London to

catch the train. Parents were not allowed to accompany them.

Each evacuee carried a gas mask; large labels hung around their necks. The labels bore the child's name, address, and the name of his school. Many carried their favorite toys. Tony held a teddy bear and Pat clutched her favorite doll. With Pat's other hand she held tightly on to Tony, hiding behind him whenever anyone spoke to them.

Most of the children cried when they said goodbye to their parents. Many were very young and frightened. They didn't really understand what was happening. They cried even harder when the train left the city of London behind. It was carrying them far from the world they knew. Many children thought they might never see their parents again.

The train stopped at every station on the long, slow journey. One by one, children got off the train. Some were greeted by relatives; others were met by complete strangers, people who had volunteered to give the city children a home for as long as they needed it.

Sometimes when Pat, Tony, and Shirley looked out on the passing countryside, they felt as if they were going on holiday. They talked excitingly about the cows and sheep they saw grazing in the fields. They had only been to the country once before.

Their parents had packed a huge lunch for them. There were sandwiches, fruit, chocolate, and cake. Eating it passed some of the time on the long journey. The three children pretended that they were having a picnic in the country. Then, when one of the younger children started to cry again, they remembered that it wasn't a picnic, and that the train was taking them further and further from their parents. No one had any idea how long it would be before they would see them again.

Autumn 1940 Life on a Farm

By the time the train crossed into Cornwall, only a few children were still on board. At the station in St. Austell, Pat, Tony, and Shirley were met by Dorothy and Norman Tyzer. Each of the children received a warm hug. "You will have so much fun on our farm!" said Dorothy. "We are thrilled that you are joining our family."

A horse and cart took them the rest of the way to the Tyzers' farm, "Tregidgeo." Pat and Tony had never visited a farm before. They didn't know whether to be scared or excited. Everything was so different from their home in London. They couldn't even see any other houses from the farm.

The long, narrow county of Cornwall juts way out into the sea. No matter where one is, the water is never very far away. Tregidgeo Farm was not on

the coast, but it was surrounded by beautiful windswept farmlands. Pat, Tony, and Shirley couldn't wait to explore, but they were tired from the long journey. After a big tea with lots of sandwiches and cakes, it was time for bed. Pat and Tony were to share a bedroom. Shirley had her own room, and so did Dorothy and Norman's daughters, Kathleen and Lillian. They were eight and ten. Pat was glad she was sharing a room with Tony. She was beginning to realize that it might be a long time before she saw her mother and father again, or perhaps never. She cried a little when she climbed into bed. Tony tried hard to comfort her, but he was only seven. He missed his parents, too.

Farmers start their day before it is light, so breakfast was served much earlier than Pat and Tony were used to. Every morning, Dorothy served the children with farm eggs and ham. A huge pile of hot toast dripped with fresh farm butter. In London, everyone's favorite foods were rationed, so the children were fortunate to be living on a farm where food was plentiful.

Farm work was hard. Often the girls helped Dorothy and Norman with the farm work by feeding the hens or pigs. Everyone in the nearby village saved their food scraps for the pigs. Nothing could be wasted now that England was at war. When the chores were done, the children explored the fields and lanes in the countryside around the farm.

Dorothy and Norman asked the children to call them Auntie and Uncle. They worked hard to be parents to their three evacuees. Their own girls loved having other children living with them. But no matter how hard Dorothy and Norman worked to make their evacuees feel at home, Pat, Tony, and Shirley never stopped missing their own parents.

During the long, cold, dark winter evenings, the five children played all kinds of games together in the large, warm farm kitchen. Sometimes they sat and colored on the kitchen table. They played hide-and-seek in the big farmhouse. They dressed up in Dorothy's old clothes and acted out their favorite stories, or made up some of their own. Often they curled up together in front of the fire and read their favorite books.

Most days, when they got home from school, the children helped Percy, the man who worked on the farm. They hunted for eggs in the chicken coop. Then, when the weather was cold or wet, and the cows were being kept in the barn, the children hand fed them with hay. When they tried to milk the cows, they laughed so much that they weren't very successful. Often the farmyard was muddy, but the children loved clumping around, their rubber wellingtons heavy with sticky wet mud. It all seemed like a wonderful new game.

Autumn 1940 **The New School**

During the week the children attended the one-room school in Grampound. All of the classes shared the same room. It had been divided into sections so that the different age groups were separated. Pat and Tony both enjoyed school, but it was very different from their large school in London. The children spoke so differently from Pat and Tony, it was sometimes difficult to understand them. However, the local children thought that Pat and Tony sounded peculiar, too. They said that they couldn't understand their accents, either!

The school in Grampound was a long way from the farm. When Pat and Tony first started going there in September 1940, they found that other evacuees already attended the school. More than anyone else, the other evacuees understood exactly how Pat and Tony felt about being so far from home. The teachers worked hard to make the new students feel comfortable, but since Pat and Tony were both extremely shy, it was difficult for them at first.

Since many children lived on farms some distance away from the school, hot lunches were served at noon. Those who lived close by went home and ate a hot lunch with their families. At that time it was the custom in England for everyone to eat their main meal in the middle of the day.

Every day, Dorothy or Norman took the children to school in a horse-drawn cart. On the way they picked up Trevor and Lou Lou, the two children from Carwinnick, a neighboring farm. It made their journey longer, but it was fun to ride to school with so many children. It was quite different from being in London and traveling everywhere on big red buses with no one to talk to but each other. At the end of the school day, they rode home again in the same horse-drawn cart.

Pat enjoyed school. She loved learning to read. Tony already knew how so he tried to help her. Sometimes he read stories to her at bedtime, and sometimes, when they felt really sad knowing that their parents were far away, Pat would crawl into Tony's bed. They held each other tightly and talked softly about the life they'd had as a family in London. Tony was a wonderful big brother. He always tried to look after Pat as best as he could.

Spring and Summer 1941 **Life in Cornwall**

By the time spring came, Pat and Tony were used to their new life. They had fun peeking into birds' nests hidden in the hedgerows along the roadsides. They picked bunches of wild violets and primroses for Auntie

Dorothy. They watched newborn lambs leaping in the fields, or crying for their mothers. Every day was a new adventure.

Each of the children had a small garden. They were given vegetable seeds to plant and were responsible for keeping their garden free of weeds, or watering the tiny plants if it hadn't rained for a while. Everyone in England was being encouraged to have vegetables. The campaign was called DIG FOR VICTORY. People who had large gardens shared them with others. Tony wrote to his mum and dad to tell them that he and Pat both had their own gardens. He was very excited about it. They wrote back to say that they had a Victory Garden, too, and so had all of their neighbors.

When their daily farm chores were finished, Tony, Pat, and Shirley rode Bonnie, the pony belonging to Auntie's two girls. Their legs were too short to reach the stirrups, so they couldn't gallop or go very fast, but they still had a lot of fun. Sometimes three of them rode the pony at the same time. On the farm, during the long, hot, fun-filled summers of 1940 and 1941, it seemed impossible that a terrible war was being fought all over Europe.

August 1941

The Drummonds Visit Cornwall

In August 1941, Mr. and Mrs. Drummond made the long train journey to Cornwall to visit Pat and Tony. It was a wonderful reunion. They were so happy to be reunited again. They had missed each other so much during the year they had been apart.

Each day of their two-week stay brought a new adventure. On fine, sunny days they rode the bus to Portholland, the only beach in Cornwall not fortified with barbed wire. Massive rolls of barbed wire along England's beaches would prevent enemy craft from landing. Together the Drummonds explored hidden coves and searched for shells. They built castles on the firm sand, or paddled in the surf at the edge of the sandy beach.

If the weather were bad, they wandered around one of the seaside villages along the coast. They drank hot cups of milky tea in tiny seaside cafés, and ate steaming plates of fish and chips for their midday meal. Potatoes and fish were never rationed, and there had always been plenty of both in Cornwall. Fishing villages dotted the length of the Cornish coast. On both of the Fridays that their parents were in Cornwall, Pat and Tony took their parents to St. Austel for market day. Dorothy and Norman had sometimes taken them there. They always enjoyed it especially when they had pocket money to spend.

What fun Pat and Tony had sharing all their favorite places with their parents! Together the Drummonds took long walks through narrow country lanes, and picnicked in grassy meadows. They paddled in woodland streams,

and picked large bunches of wildflowers to give to Auntie Dorothy. They taught their parents the names of the flowers and trees and birds. They ate wild strawberries, and sampled the sour red blackberries just beginning to ripen in the hedgerows. On Sundays they went to the tiny church in Creed. No one wanted their time together to end.

Pat and Tony were especially proud of their vegetable gardens, and the rockery they'd built next to the pond. They rode Bonnie to show how brave they were, and they showed their parents the new kittens asleep in the barn. Mr. and Mrs. Drummond were delighted to see how happy their children were with Norman and Dorothy. The Drummonds, too, were treated as members of the family. But when it was time for them to say goodby to their children, their hearts were broken once again.

September 1941 to June 1942 School Begins Again

In September, school started again. It was Pat and Tony's second year of school in Cornwall. It no longer felt as strange as it had the year before, and they'd even learned to understand the Cornish accent of their classmates. After school, and on the weekends, the children picked baskets of juicy ripe blackberries from the hedgerows, and helped Auntie Dorothy make them into jam. Together, at the large kitchen table, they rolled out pastry and peeled apples from the orchard to make blackberry and apple pies. But the days quickly grew shorter. The leaves turned gold and fell from the trees; hazelnuts ripened in the hedgerows.

Before long, darkness fell as early as four o'clock in the afternoon, so the children kept themselves entertained by drawing or helping Dorothy with the cooking. Tony loved to draw maps, and he spent a lot of time working on them. They all loved to read, too. And at five every day, the children settled down in front of a roaring fire to listen to "Children's Hour" on the wireless. There was no television in those days.

At Christmas there were gifts and letters from Pat and Tony's parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Pat and Tony had each made things at school to give to Dorothy and Norman, and their two girls. Since they lived on a farm, they had a nice fat turkey for their Christmas dinner. They ate vegetables grown in the children's Victory Gardens, and for dessert, there were mince pies and Christmas pudding. It was a very different meal from their daily school dinners! The meal over, and the clean-up finished, everyone gathered around the fireplace and sang Christmas carols. But the cows still had to be milked at four o'clock, and the eggs collected from the chickens. No day is ever really a holiday on a farm.

When the holiday celebrations had ended, Tony wrote a thank you letter to his grandparents in London

Tredidgeo Grampound

Dear Nannie Bowler and Grampa,

Thank you very much for the things you sent me. We had a good time at Christmas. I hope Grampa was a big boy and didn't cry when he had his teeth out. Did the dentist leave one tooth to eat his meat with? I had three teeth filled and didn't cry. When is Uncle Dennis coming in his aeroplane? We have a big field where he can land.

Lots of love

from

Tony

Spring 1943

Going Home

Before long, the worst of the Cornish winter was over. The first snowdrops began to peep out of the ground. Crocuses and daffodils bloomed in the farm's flower garden; purple violets and creamy primroses appeared in the hedgerows. Summer and the warmer weather wouldn't be far behind. And with the longer days, the children could play outside hour after hour. Country life in spring and summer was a wonderful time for children.

For a while there had been a lull in the bombing on London. The nightly raids had stopped. Parents missed their children so much that many children returned home. Pat and Tony's parents missed them greatly, too. The children had already been in Cornwall for two years.

In Cornwall it had become difficult for Dorothy and Norman to continue to care for their evacuees. Dorothy worked hard on the farm, and for a long time a girl named Lavender had helped in the house. Lavender had been informed by the government that she was needed for farm work elsewhere.

All young women were required to work in factories or join the Girls' Land Army. Young men who had been farm laborers were now soldiers. Girls were needed to replace them. Since Norman had only 216 acres, and already had Percy working for him, he wasn't permitted to have any other help. and so it was decided that Pat and Tony should return home. Their friend Shirley had already left.

Pat and Tony couldn't wait to get home although they would miss the farm in Cornwall and the people that lived there. Even though their parents had been so far away, they had enjoyed their two years on the farm. They had

learned so much and their lives had been so different from their lives in the city.

July 1942 to January 1943

Life in London

Although the family was delighted to be reunited, being back in a large city felt very strange to Pat and Tony. Brownhill Road School, the school they had attended before going to Cornwall, was across the street from their home. It no longer had room for them. Part of Brownhill Road School was being used by older boys. Their own school had been bombed and they needed classrooms. With so many evacuees still living in the countryside, Brownhill School had empty classrooms they could use.

Every school had less space than in 1939. The Saint John's Ambulance Service occupied part of Brownhill School: other schools held the headquarters for the local Air Raid Wardens. Pat and Tony now had to attend Sandhurst Road School, half an hour's walk away. So they not only had to adjust to being back in London, they had to adjust to a new school, too. In July 1942, Tony wrote a letter to Auntie Dorothy.

224 Brownhill Road

Catford

London, SE6

Dear Auntie

*We are getting used to being home now,
but we miss the fields and animals. Daddy and
Mummy are buying a rabbit for my birthday. Daddy
has made me a footbridge and a level-crossing for
my train set, and now he is making a viaduct. Fluff
has just had a kitten, we can hear it squeaking. We
hope she has a lot more. We are soon going to bed
so I must finish now.*

Lots of love

from Tony

P.S. Send my love to everyone.

The birth of Ruff's kitten, planning the purchase of a rabbit, and working and playing with their dad, did help Pat and Tony adjust to being home, but they also had to get used to being in a large school again. It was so different from the one-room village school in Cornwall.

Schools and libraries became prime targets for Hitler's bombers since both were being used as first aid stations by the Red Cross, and as headquarters of voluntary organizations such as the Air Raid Wardens and Auxiliary

Fireman. Nothing was the same as it was before the war began. Young teachers, both male and female, were now in the army or other services. They had been replaced by teachers who had retired long before. To their students, they seemed ancient. That was something else that Pat and Tony had to adjust to. Another stress.

For a while after Pat and Tony returned from Cornwall, the skies over London were quiet. But it wasn't very long before air raid sirens began to scream night after night. And whenever the sound of sirens screamed through the night air, the Drummonds hurried to the public air raid shelter that had once been the cellar of their house. The entrance was right outside their front door. They usually went fully dressed. During the Blitz, the time of the heaviest and most continuous bombing, Londoners rarely undressed at bedtime. They knew they would most probably have to go to a shelter at some point during the night.

So far, Catford, the area of southeast London where Pat and Tony lived, had not been bombed. But, at the first scream of the siren, Pat, Tony, their parents, and their neighbors always gathered blankets, pillows, candles, and food and trudged down the steep concrete steps into the underground shelter. It was impossible to guess how long they would be there and they needed to be well prepared. Pat hated it, and dreaded hearing the sound of the sirens night after night.

Like every other shelter, theirs held a great many people and was equipped with slatted wooden bunks, concrete floors, and pillars for reinforcement. It felt cold, damp, and uncomfortable and no one got much sleep. People felt so safe in the underground shelters that they usually chattered and ate. Strong friendships were formed and people grew very close. Those who had once been strangers became friends. However, it was always a tremendous relief when the all clear sounded and families left the shelters and returned home to bed, at least for a while.

January 1943

Tragedy Strikes

When Pat and Tony had been home from Cornwall for six months, two days before Pat's eighth birthday, everything changed for the Drummonds. It was Wednesday, January 20th, 1943. Noon. Suddenly some of the older girls at the school noticed a German bomber circling overhead. The younger children, still inside finishing the cooked midday meal, were ordered to get under the tables. Those who had finished eating were already outside playing. The teachers supervising the playground shouted at them to run to the shelters. Part of the school building had been reinforced for use as a shelter. But it was then that the bomb fell making a direct hit on the school.

The sound of the bomb was heard over quite a large distance. Pat's father was one of the Auxiliary (volunteer) Firemen who rushed to the school to see if they could help locate missing and injured children, or administer first aid. He was terrified that his own two children might be among those injured and killed.

Pat had still been in the dining hall, finishing her lunch. The blast from the bomb was so intense that when Pat was rescued, they found that the back of her skirt and coat were ripped in half. Only the collar was holding them onto her dazed body. The heat and the dust-filled-air are something that Pat would never forget.

The rubble was so high in the dining hall that the surviving children crawled over the rubble and out of the window, lowering themselves into the loving arms of the waiting firemen and air raid wardens. Pat was among them. A piece of shrapnel lay embedded deep in her leg.

The injured children were carried across the street to the library where a first aid station was set up. From there the children went by ambulance to a nearby hospital. It is believed that the German pilot's targets were originally the library as well as the school. Not content with scoring a direct hit on the school, the pilot circled around and flew low as he machine-gunned the children in the street instead of bombing the library. Many children were on their way home for lunch. Both adults and children were killed by that pilot's gunfire; others were injured by shrapnel.

No one who was there would ever forget what happened on that sunny winter day. One teacher and thirty-one children were killed. 9 1/2 year-old Tony was one of them. Pat and a great many others were injured. Mr. and Mrs. Drummond were greatly relieved that Pat was alive, but they were devastated by Tony's death. Nothing would ever be quite the same again.

January 1943 The Funeral

On January 27, the Bishop of Southwark came to Saint Andrew's Church, Catford. He was there to lead the memorial service for those who had died. "The children's death is not going to be lost or wasted in its effect on the world," he said. "They will be avenged. It wrings our hearts the more when we think of your children going off happily to school and not returning home." At this point, many of the two hundred family members, their surviving children, and the friends who filled the church began to sob. It was a terrible moment.

After the service, a choirboy led the procession of mourners to the cemetery. In his hands he carried a large cross. Following him through the city streets, the relatives walked in a long sorrowing line. When they passed the school where classrooms gaped, half gone and tattered, many of them hid

their faces. Civil Defense workers were still clearing away the rubble. The *Daily Mirror* reported that, "None could bear to look at it, for it had been a merry place and now it was ugly and stark."

As they approached the cemetery, the procession of mourners passed between long, silent lines of people. Some of the mourners were small children who had survived. They stood along the edge of the curb in support of those whose children had died. Pat and many other injured children were still in the hospital.

The children were buried in one large grave. When the mourners reached the graveside, they gathered around the damp, crumbling hole. They looked down on the tiny white coffins, grouped around the much larger coffin that held the body of Miss Harriet Langdon, the teacher who had died. It was a heartbreakin sight. Each coffin bore a small silver plaque. On each plaque was the name and age of each child. Their ages ranged from six to eleven. Hilde Marchant, a newspaper reporter for the *Daily Mirror*, wrote, "*It was such a tiny hole to hold so much. But then the victims were so small and the thirty-one coffins needed but little space in the earth to receive them. Yet those children who died when a Nazi bomb hit their school in Catford, London, a week ago and were buried yesterday in a communal grave taught the world a lesson. They showed us the hideous black soul of the enemy.*"

When parents found their child's name, they threw bunches of flowers onto the coffin. Everyone wept bitterly. The men tried to be strong so that they could comfort their wives, but it was impossible. No one could forget that the lives of their children had barely begun.

When the graveside service was over, a group of air raid wardens scattered dust onto the coffins. They were the same men who had dug the children's bodies out of the rubble that had once been a school. Silently they saluted the children they had hoped to save. All around them were the graves of others who had died since the war began.

As they walked away, the men noticed a group of silent children, the survivors. They huddled together, waiting to throw small bunches of violets and snowdrops into the mass grave. The first flowers of spring, a spring their friends and classmates would not see.

As Hilde Marchant wrote in her article, "*These children were from the school. They had survived, and as the bereaved mothers saw the familiar faces of children their own had once played with, they hurried past them, their handkerchiefs tight to their eyes.*"

She continued, "*That was the scene as thirty-one children and their schoolmistress were buried. There were yards of flowers, heaps of messages, but there was no consolation for the women who went back to their homes to*

ease their hearts. The crowds went home and I again looked at the grave. It was such a tiny hole."

Ken Roberts, Auntie Dorothy's brother, lived in London. He attended the funeral service, and afterwards, in a long letter sent to Dorothy in Cornwall, he wrote:

... Slowly then, the mourners and hundreds of others filed slowly past the grave dropping more floral tributes onto the coffins. Occasionally, a little boy or a little girl would drop his or her little bunch of snowdrops or violets on the coffin of a one-time playmate, and, bursting into tears would flee from the grave for dear life - heartbroken ... One woman had to be dragged from the grave: she kept crying, "Don't take me away. I want to go with them" ... hope I haven't struck too sad a note, but I wanted, if possible, to give you the same impression as an eyewitness got there today.

For the Drummonds, their once happy family was shattered. It broke their hearts, in the hours after the bombing, to see Pat lying so still in her large hospital bed. A sharp piece of shrapnel was embedded in her leg. She looked so small and pale. They'd had to break the news that Tony, her beloved brother, had been killed.

January to October 1943 **Life Goes On**

Pat and her brother had grown extremely close during their time as evacuees. In two more days it would be Pat's eighth birthday, a birthday that no one felt like celebrating. It was impossible for the Drummonds to forgive themselves for bringing the children home from the safety of Cornwall. There had been so many posters that told parents, "Your Children are Safer in the Country." But the Drummonds felt sure that Pat and Tony would be safe in London and so they had welcomed them home.

A week later Pat came home from the hospital. The house seemed so empty without Tony, and it took a long time before Pat and her parents felt like smiling. The war was far from over, and thoughts of Tony filled their minds. They tried to cheer each other up, but their hearts were filled with a terrible sadness. And, now, the sound of the air raid siren seemed even more sinister and threatening than it had before Tony's death.

But daily life had to go on. Once Pat left the hospital, she returned to Brownhill Road School, the school across the street from her house where she'd gone as a four-year-old. Sandhurst Road School had been bombed too badly to be used. After a while she began to take dancing lessons, and later on she had piano lessons, too. It was hoped that these new activities might take her mind off Tony and how much she missed him.

Pat's father and mother continued to run their hairdressing business. Since the government considered it to be a necessary service profession, her

father had not been required to join the army, navy, or air force. So at least Pat and her mother had his company and support after Tony was killed. Many families had no men to turn to at that terrible time.

The Drummonds' hairdressing salons were always busy. People still had their hair cut, permed, or set. Looking good kept up their morale. Wartime clothing styles were plain and clothing coupons seldom allowed each person to buy new clothes. Hair was the only thing that could help people to look nice. But even the chatter of their customers could not block out the grief Pats' mother and father felt. Tony's death had left an enormous hole in their once happy lives. At times they felt as if their hearts would break, but for Pat's sake they did their best to stay cheerful.

Pat's dad worked on the ground floor of their home where he and his brother-in-law cut men's hair; several women worked on the ladies' hair upstairs. Pat's mother was kept so busy with towel-washing and cleaning, she had no time to work with the W.V.S. (Women's Voluntary Service) as many women did, or do any knitting for the soldiers at the battle front. There were no washing machines to help with the laundry in those days.

The intense vibration from nearby bombing had smashed windows in many neighborhood buildings. The large window of their hair salon had been one of those broken. It was pointless replacing it. It had been boarded up for years. Just one tiny window remained. In it was a wig on a cloth head, the only indication that it was still a hairdressing business.

Throughout the war Pat's father and the other Auxiliary Fire Service members were called out on duty at all hours of the day and night, going wherever and whenever they were needed. Bombing raids could occur at any time. Pat's dad and the other volunteers helped the Air Raid Wardens clear bomb damage, search for people and pets buried in bombed buildings, or administer first aid to the wounded. They also assisted the full-time firemen in extinguishing fires after bombing raids.

Auxiliary Firemen, the Home Guard, and Air Raid Wardens, were all volunteer services, invaluable in protecting, comforting, and assisting Londoners in need. Many volunteers were older than the age limit for joining the armed forces, but they had a vital role. The British could not have survived the war without them.

On one special afternoon, the war and Tony's death were forgotten for a little while. Pat and her mother walked down Brownhill Road to the Hippodrome, a cinema in Catford High Street. There they escaped into a colorful, magical world as they watched Walt Disney's "Fantasia." Pat was nine. It was 1944, the fifth year of the war. As they left the cinema, the air raid siren sounded. It signaled the start of one of the occasional daytime raids.

They couldn't decide whether to go into a nearby shelter or try to hurry home. They chose to go home, and fortunately, got there safely.

Since Brownhill Road was not one of London's main roads, no army convoys passed in front of their house. However, at night, planes frequently flew over Catford. The planes were usually en route to the neighboring communities of Lewisham and New Cross. Both communities were bombed repeatedly and very badly. Sometimes the raids occurred during the day. During those daytime raids, Pat and her family couldn't block out either the sound of the planes or the memories of Tony's death. The horror of that day came flooding back, engulfing them with grief.

1945

Two Priceless Gifts

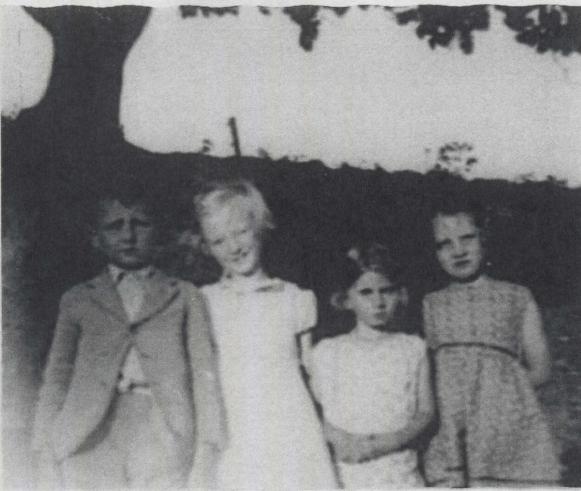
Although the war was still being fought fiercely in many parts of Europe, with the added manpower from America, it seemed as if the war might soon end. The loss of life had been terrible, and the newspapers were still full of so much tragedy and terror.

It was spring again, and Pat's thoughts turned to Cornwall as they did each spring when the first snowdrops and crocuses appeared in city gardens. How she missed picking wild flowers from the hedgerows of Cornwall. And how she ached for Tony. But she was still unable to talk about the happy times they had shared there.

The war in Europe finally ended in May, 1945. On October 20th, five months later, the Drummonds had another daughter, Susan. Pat was ten. Everyone was delighted to have a new baby in the family. The Drummonds continued living in the house they had owned since before the war. Except for broken windows, the house had survived the war without damage. It was their family that would never recover.

As the weather grew warmer and the days longer, Pat's thoughts turned more and more often to Cornwall. She began to talk of the wonderful times she and Tony had shared when they lived on the farm. She talked about what close friends she and Tony had become. And she talked of how wonderful Dorothy and Norman had been to them. She gave her parents back the two years of Tony's life that they had missed. That and their new baby were priceless gifts.

PAT



September 1939, soon after arriving in Cornwall.
L. to R. - Tony, Kathleen (Lillian's sister), Shirley
(the other evacuee), and Pat.

Cornwall, 1939 - riding
Bonny, the girls' pony
- L. to R. - Shirley, Pat,
and Tony.



Early 1940 - on the farm
in Cornwall - L. to R. - Pat,
Mr. Percy (the man who
helped on the farm), Lillian,
Lavender (who helped in
the house and left to be
a Land Army girl), Tony,
and Kathleen.

PAT



Summer 1940 - in the garden in Cornwall. Pat and Tony's parents come for a visit. L. to R. - back row, Lillian, Dad; second row, Grandpa Roberts (Lillian and Kathleen's maternal grandpa), Mum, Lillian and Kathleen's grandma; front row, Kathleen, Pat, and Tony.



Summer 1940 - Cornwall - Tony, their mum, and Pat

PAT



The children attempt to make a rockery in the garden in Cornwall.
L. to R. - Tony, sisters Kathleen and Lillian, and Pat.

Summer 1940 - Cornwall - Tony, Pat and Tony's mum, and Pat



224 Brownhill Rd
Catford SE6
July 27th

Dear Auntie

We are getting used to being home now, but we miss the fields and animals. Daddy and Mummy are buying a rabbit for my birthday. Daddy has made me a footbridge and a level-crossing, and now he is making a viaduct. Fluff has just had a kitten, we can hear it speaking. We hope she has a lot more. We are soon going to bed so I must finish now.

Lots of love
from Tony

PS send my love to everyone.

Tregidgo
Grampound

Dear Nannie Bowler & Grampa

Thank you very much for the things you sent me. We had a good ^{time} at Christmas. I hope Grampa was a big boy and didn't cry when he had his teeth out. Did the ^{dentist} leave one tooth to eat his meal with, I had three teeth filled and didn't cry. When is Uncle Dennis coming in his aeroplane, we have a big field where he can land. Lots of

love

from

Gerry



TOP LEFT:

Sept. 3, 1999 - Westminster Abbey
- lady wears her W.V.S. uniform
and carries a gas mask.

TOP RIGHT:

Sept. 3, 1999 - Westminster Abbey
- children dressed in 1939 clothing

BOTTOM:

Sept. 3, 1999 - Westminster Abbey
- children in 1939 clothing, wearing
labels and carrying gas masks.

PAT



Pat at the September 3, 1999 reunion of evacuees. She is wearing a label like the one she wore as an evacuee in the summer of 1940. Her label read: Pat Drummond, evacuated to Grampound, Cornwall. She is holding the gas mask she received in 1939.



PART THREE

URSULA

A Jewish Teenager Grows up in Wartime Germany

1925 to 1932 Family Life

Ursula Naumann was born on December 16, 1925. Her sister, Hannelore, was born on April 1, 1927, fifteen months later. Together with their parents, Margarete and Siegfried Naumann, they lived in an apartment in Steglitz, a suburb of Berlin, Germany.

Ursula and Hannelore enjoyed their childhood. “*Mutti*” (Mommy) played with them often, taking them to the playground in summer. In winter, she took them ice skating on a nearby frozen lake, or went sledding with them down the hill in the park. In the evenings, *Mütti* and *Vater* (Father) read to the girls, or the four of them played games.

During the long hot summer days their mother, Margarete, often prepared a picnic of drinks, meat, potato salad, and cake. The girls always carried the lunch in their two backpacks. Since they had no car, nor did they know anyone who owned one, the family made the ten-minute walk to catch the streetcar that would take them to the Grünewald Forest. From there it was a thirty-minute walk to Lake Grünewaldsee.

Siegfried, their father, spread a blanket beside the water, and while their parents chatted or read the newspaper, the girls stripped off their clothes and swam. Neither girl knew how to swim, but they had great fun lying on their stomachs near the water’s edge, splashing around and pretending that they could. Lunch, eaten in the fresh air, was always delicious, and, when they were all exhausted, they returned home.

Once a year, during summer vacation, the girls took the train to Pasewalk, 120 kilometers northeast of Berlin. Margarete’s parents (the girls’ grandparents), lived there with her unmarried sister, Agnes. Margarete’s other sister, *Tante* Paula, was married to *Onkel* Arno, and lived a few minutes away. Paula and Arno had six children. For Ursula, Hannelore, and their cousins, the summers were happy, carefree times.

Everything in Pasewalk seemed so different from their life in the huge capital city of Berlin. Behind their grandparents’ house was a cobblestone courtyard with chickens, and behind that, a garden. Their grandfather was always busy working in the garden or in his workshop. Once he helped Hannelore build something out of wood.

When Ursula was small, her grandmother fell, and from then on needed crutches to walk. Most of her time was spent sewing, sitting on her chair in

front of the window. Sometimes she sat in the kitchen and helped Tante Agi by preparing vegetables. Often Ursula played with her oldest cousin, Eberhard. He was five years younger than Ursula. All of the cousins admired Ursula and Hannelore, and were impressed because they lived in Berlin.

On winter afternoons, the Naumanns often visited friends of the family or relatives of Margarete's, or relatives and friends visited them. Visits usually began with coffee and cake, and then, in the evenings, they ate a cold supper. Ursula's father had no relatives in Berlin.

Siegfried, Ursula's father, was Jewish, but Margarete had a Christian father and Jewish mother. Each year the Naumanns celebrated Christmas but they had never been churchgoers. Although they didn't know it at the time, December 1932 was the last time they would celebrate Christmas. Their lives were about to change completely.

1933

Hitler Comes to Power

On January 30, 1933, when Adolph Hitler, leader of the Nazi party, was elected Chancellor of Germany, Ursula had just had her seventh birthday. On February 22, Hitler swore in 40,000 men as an auxiliary police force. They were known as the S.A. (Storm Troopers or "Brown Shirts") and the S.S. (Protection Squad or "Black Shirts"). The appointment of this ruthless police force, along with Hitler's own appointment, marked the beginning of twelve nightmare years for all Jews, years that many of them did not survive. The Naumanns decided it was time for the girls to learn about their Jewish heritage so, after school, the girls began taking lessons at a nearby Hebrew school. Instead of Christmas, the family would now celebrate Jewish holidays such as Hanukkah and Passover.

From April 1 onwards, there was a Nazi boycott of all Jewish shops and businesses. Ursula's father was a *kaufmann*, a merchant. He worked as a buyer for a department store. Jewish people were no longer allowed to own businesses or hold important positions of any kind, so, for a while, Ursula's father became a traveling salesman. Then, suddenly, he was unemployed. In order to earn a little money for the family, on foot, very early in the mornings, Ursula's father delivered the *Berliner Morgenposte* newspaper. Ursula's mother did sewing work - tailoring, mending, making clothes, anything her customers wanted. It became extremely difficult for Ursula's parents, Margarete and Siegfried, to earn enough money for them to live the way they had been used to living.

Tante Agnes (Agi) was the oldest of Margarete's two sisters, was forbidden to marry young, so she continued to care for her parents. But in 1933, at age thirty-five, she wanted to marry a Christian. When she went to the *Rassenamt* (Race Relations Office) to get permission, they measured her

head and took a blood sample. They decided her features were more Jewish than Christian, and that she had more Jewish blood than Christian blood. She and her fiancé were forbidden from marrying. It wasn't until the war ended in 1945 that they were finally able to wed.

In April 1933, during Ursula's time in second grade, something happened that marked the end of her wonderful childhood. Her teacher, an older man, played the violin when they sang. He taught them poems and letter sounds, Ursula felt a little scared of him. One morning, quite unexpectedly, he announced, "We will no longer say Good Morning. Instead we'll begin our day with Heil Hitler." He made the children practice a few times. "Stand up! Raise your right arm! Say Heil Hitler! Sit down!"

For seven-year Ursula, that announcement ended her wonderful, carefree childhood. Although her teacher never referred to her as a Jew, Ursula's classmates broke her heart by treating her differently, ignoring her and refusing to play with her.

1934 to 1935 Anti-Semitism

In 1934, when Germany's president, Paul On Hindenburg died, Adolph Hitler became president of Germany as well as its chancellor. He was known as "*Der Führer*." Already his first concentration camp had opened at Dachau near Munich. It wasn't long before it became known as one of the infamous "death camps."

The Nuremberg Laws, passed in 1935, changed the lives of all Jewish families. No longer considered to be German citizens, they surrendered their silver, lost their jobs, and could no longer speak to Gentiles.

Ursula and Hannelore had always enjoyed school, but once Hitler came to power, each school day became a nightmare. Ursula's school situation was difficult but things were even worse for her sister. Hannelore, the younger of the two, often cried in the mornings. Her teacher showed so much hate for Jews she no longer wanted to attend school.

Ursula attended a *Volkschule*, meaning people's school or public school. Her fellow students showed intense hatred towards Jewish children and the teachers did nothing to discourage it. Although one teacher, Mrs. Charlotte Müller, was always nice, most of them were extremely anti-Semitic, treating Jewish children badly. One day Mrs. Müller told Ursula's father that she was ashamed to be German. But every day, the girls were forced to endure unkind treatment, and it grew worse daily.

1936 School Days

When Hitler referred to Jews as rodents who should be exterminated, many others followed his lead. Jewish children had few playmates and Ursula and Hannelore's classmates refused to speak to them. By 1936, the situation was so bad that Margarete and Siegfried decided to send their daughters to a Jewish school.

The Jewish Federation had opened many new schools, but because of their age difference, Hannelore and Ursula could not attend the same school. And, although the public school had become an uncomfortable, unhappy place to be, neither Ursula nor her sister wanted to change schools. However, Hannelore was enrolled at *Fasanenstrasse*, a famous temple school near Kurfürstendamm, the main shopping street, and Ursula began attending a private school, *Klopstockstrasse School*, near the Tiergarten area of Berlin.

The train ride to Ursula's new school took over half an hour, and she had to change of trains en route. Margarete took Hannelore for the first few days, and Siegfried took Ursula. Once she got used to the journey, and the school, what followed were the happiest period of Ursula's school days. It was there that she met her best friend, Inge Gorczelancik. She and Inge spent every possible moment in each other's company, visiting each other's homes, or going out together.

The teachers tried their best to repair the children's self esteem. They were aware of what they had each endured day after day in German schools. They gave them the best education possible, an education that would prepare them for the future. No one knew then that for many, there would be no future.

1938 Changes

From July 23, 1938, onwards, all Jews over fifteen must have an identity card. Stamped on it was a large letter "J" for *Juden*, Jew. Jews caught without their cards were severely punished.

On August 17, Sarah became the official middle name of all Jewish females. Ursula was now Ursula Sarah Naumann, the Sarah indicating that she was Jewish. Israel was added to the name of every male. The new names were added to each Identity card, *Kennkarte*, and all Jews were forced to sign a document agreeing to the change. They had no choice. On October 5, the letter "J" was also stamped on all passports.

Then, on the evening of November 9, 1938, something occurred which made things even worse for Jews. The Naumanns knew nothing about it until the following morning. On November 10, Ursula was sick and had stayed home from school. Soon after Hannelore left for the day, she returned home

again. She brought the horrifying news that her school and temple were burning.

Gradually, Ursula and her family learned more about the events that came to be known as *Kristallnacht*. Their Berlin suburb of Steglitz had few stores and there was not much damage, but in the heart of Berlin, Jewish-owned homes, stores, businesses, and temples had been destroyed, burned, or looted.

Early 1939

A Chance to Escape

In late 1938 and early 1939, an English organization contacted Jewish groups in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. They had organized a way for Jewish children to escape to the safety of England. Each child had to have an English sponsor, one who was willing to pay ten English pounds. Today it would be worth much more, but in those days that was a lot of money.

Sponsors must promise to take complete responsibility for the child they were sponsoring. In cases where a Jewish child didn't have a relative in England, another person might sponsor them. Not all sponsors were Jewish. Many English people understood the danger that Jewish children were in, and wanted to help.

In England, people had heard about *Kristallnacht*. They also heard more and more rumors about Jewish people disappearing from their homes. At that time, no one outside Germany knew exactly what it was that Jewish people were experiencing, and even within Germany, people had difficulty believing the rumors that they heard.

Ursula's family had no friends or relatives in England. Nor did they seriously consider sending their girls out of the country. Since Ursula's grandfather was a Christian, they thought that would protect them. And living in the suburbs of Berlin rather than in the center of the city as Hilda's family did, they hadn't experienced, or witnessed, as much of the destruction and cruelty as the Ankers. The danger didn't seem as real.

September to December 1939

Curfew and Rationing

On September 3rd, 1939, Ursula and her family read in the paper that England had declared war on Nazi Germany. Germany had ignored Great Britain's ultimatum to withdraw their troops from Czechoslovakia and Poland by 11 a.m. on September 3, so the British Prime Minister declared war.

That same day, British planes flew over many German cities. They dropped leaflets, but German soldiers picked them up before anyone could read them. When Ursula's father came home from his newspaper job, he told

them that a man he'd talked to said, "This is going to be the end. Hitler will be finished in a very short time." He couldn't have been more wrong. The war would last six long years, six years of death and terror for those people who were Jewish.

A curfew for Jews forbade them to be out on winter evenings after 8:00, and after 9:00 in summer. Then, beginning on September 23, 1939, Jews were no longer allowed to have radios or telephones. A Star of David had to be fixed on every Jewish family's door and shopping was restricted to the hour between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. There were so many restrictions that life was far from normal. Stress and anxiety about the future filled each day.

Although ration cards were issued to everyone living in Germany, a "J" was stamped on those belonging to Jews. Gradually more and more food items were rationed, available in limited amounts, or not available at all whereas larger quantities, and a better selection, were always available for non-Jews. Jews received no permits for rationed clothing.

1940

The Danger Increases

With insufficient supplies of bread and potatoes, from 1940 onwards the Naumanns always felt hungry. Before long, Jews could no longer buy milk, eggs, or meat. They were permitted to buy no clothes. Even soap needed a ration card, and that card, too, was marked with a "J." Since soap was in short supply, the Naumanns' country-dwelling relatives sometimes included soap in the packages they sent them. In some areas of Germany it was easier for Jews to get supplies than it was in Berlin.

Ursula's father worked for Lufthansa, Germany's airline; her mother worked in a factory. They both had long hours and six-day work weeks. Simple things like laundry became almost impossible to fit into their busy work schedules. There were no washing machines at that time, and as Jews, Ursula's family was not allowed to hire anyone to do their laundry. Washing sheets and clothes on a Sunday became an endless chore for her parents, a task for which they had little energy or enthusiasm.

Anti-Semitism (acts and words against Jewish people) occurred everywhere, and more and more often. It became increasingly difficult for Jews to be on the street, or to lead any kind of normal life. "*Juden Raus*" was handwritten on the door of many apartment buildings: "Jews out!" In January 1940, the Naumanns were forced to move to a "*Juden Haus*," an apartment building for Jewish people only.

Fall 1940

Forced Labor

In 1940, at age fourteen, Ursula had completed the highest grade her Jewish school offered. It was time to transfer to a high school, but since the Nazi government felt that Jewish children did not need an education, she wasn't accepted anywhere. Although some schools continued until 1941, most closed in April 1940.

One day, during that summer of 1940, Inge suggested that Ursula should go to the Elijah School with her. The school, held only in the mornings, prepared young people for living and working in Israel. But Ursula didn't attend for long because no one could leave Germany. There was no way to escape the approaching horrors.

Since Ursula could no longer attend school, she spent her days at home, bored and unhappy. Her parents both worked and her sister's school still operated. When Ursula received a notice from the *Fontane Promenade*, an employment office responsible for sending Jews to do forced labor, she felt pleased. She would earn money and it would give her something to do. She had not enjoyed lying around in her bedroom.

Ursula was sent immediately to the Siemens factory. Siemens is a large company which still does a great deal of business with the United States. She worked that first day from 2:30 until 11:00 p.m. Since Jewish families no longer owned telephones, she couldn't let her parents know her whereabouts. In any case, her mother was at one factory, and her father somewhere else. When she told her boss her concerns, he didn't even acknowledge that she had spoken.

No law protected Jews. Employers treated them any way they wished. Everywhere Jews were being beaten and murdered, sometimes for speaking out against the government. Sometimes there was little reason other than that they were Jewish. The Nazis used every excuse to punish or humiliate Jews. It was close to midnight when Ursula arrived home that first night. She was crying. Working in a factory at age 14 was overwhelming for her. She knew no one there. And because of the blackout, the journey home was terrifying. No lights were allowed anywhere; the darkness was so total she expected to crash into a wall at any moment. Many people wore small fluorescent buttons or badges made of phosphor when they went out at night. They gave off a tiny glow and helped people to see each other as they struggled through the blackness.

1941

Factory Work

Gradually Ursula got used to the six-day work week, long hours, and hostile working conditions. Like the other Jewish workers, one week she

worked from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., then on alternate weeks, only from 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. But every day she rose at 4 a.m., dressed, had coffee and a slice of bread, then made the long walk to the subway station. It was necessary to catch the 5:10 a.m. train. Jewish workers were met at the factory gate at 5:45 then marched inside by the foreman.

On the weeks when the work day ended at 11:00 at night. Ursula was faced with a walk to the subway station, a twenty-minute subway ride, and a ten minute walk to reach her home. In the morning many other people were around, but at night she often traveled alone. And since Jewish people were not allowed to sit down in subway trains, and the train cars were unlit because of the blackout, the journey was almost unbearable.

Every window in Germany had long been covered with heavy black curtains or black paper. Just as the British hid their homes and buildings from the Germans in what was called "the blackout," the Germans did the same. It was to confuse the British pilots as to the exact location of cities, towns, and most particularly, factories, when they came on frequent bombing raids. The darkness was total.

It was illegal for Siemens to force young people to work the long hours they did. The Germans employed at the factory worked only from 8:30 to 5:00. The Siemens company felt no compassion for the Jewish workers. Ursula's parents were not able to make things easier for her.

Ursula was the youngest in her department. They were all Jewish, but most of the workers were older than her. Gradually she made friends and began feeling more comfortable. Once the youngest of the workers were accustomed to the working conditions, they talked and laughed together and had a good time. However, Ursula felt convinced that working with phosphor every day was unhealthy. No one knew what they were making. "Something needed for the war effort," they were told.

One day their boss read them a letter he'd received from his son in Poland. It described how, in every village they went to, he and the other soldiers were responsible for rounding up the Jews including children and the elderly. The Jews were locked in the synagogue and the synagogue set on fire. The boss's son and the other soldiers had stood around laughing, enjoying the terrified screams of the Jews who were trapped inside. Ursula realized that no matter how she felt, she could not cry. Crying would show the boss the reaction he wanted. She had to be strong.

Ursula and her companions were not treated badly, nor were they treated well. They worked for a wage, but the government fined them 15% of their salary. Called *Juden Busse*, Jews had been paying it since November 1938. The government claimed that *Kristallnacht*, in which Jewish businesses,

schools, and temples were destroyed and burned, was the fault of the Jews. They must pay for the damage.

One night, there had been some heavy bombing on Berlin. The factory was not damaged, but there was no electricity and the machinery could not be used. Since she couldn't work, Ursula was reading. Her boss yelled at her, giving her a terrible fright. To punish her he ordered her to clean all the windows in her department.

Wood surrounded the base of the building, but above the wood, reaching all the way to the ceiling, were extremely dirty windows. Since no one held the ladder for Ursula, cleaning the windows became a long, slow, dangerous task. But it was impossible to refuse. Workers were told, "If you don't follow orders, you will be sent east." There had been rumors that "east" meant Auschwitz, and that Auschwitz meant death.

1941

Restrictions

In early 1941, every house or apartment building occupied by a Jewish family bore a large white star. This made it easy to identify where Jewish people lived and increased the amount of name calling and other kinds of persecution. It also made it easy for the police and Nazis to know whose door bell to ring when they decided to harass or deport the occupants.

The Nazis were ruthless in their treatment of Jews. One of the many restrictions placed upon Jewish families was that they were forbidden to have pets. Families were ordered to turn their pets in to the police. The Naumann's had owned a little black and white cat, Milane, since 1934. It was a much loved member of the family. Giving her up broke their hearts. No one knew what happened to the animals, but everyone assumed that they were killed. The Naumanns couldn't bear thinking about it.

From late 1941 onwards, Jewish people were forced to wear a yellow-colored Jewish star. It had to be worn on each person's outer garments whenever they went outdoors. The Naumanns each had several stars. Ursula's mother lined the stars so they wouldn't fall apart. Safety pins stitched onto the back of the stars made them easy to move from garment to garment. Being caught without the star could lead to imprisonment or even death. Since Ursula didn't look Jewish she sometimes left the house without wearing her star. In a small town she couldn't have done that. Someone would have reported her. She even went to the movies with friends without her star, but had she been caught, it could have harmed her whole family.

In spite of the restrictions, the young people managed to have fun. One of her friends had a record player, the kind you stacked ten records on and it

played them all one by one. On Sundays, as they danced to the music, pretending for a short while that life was normal.

The feeling against Jews was so strong that almost everyone in Germany would report any Jew they recognized who was not wearing his star. Ursula still has her star. It was the only thing she had left that was truly hers during the last four years of the war, the one thing that no one would take away from her.

January 1943

The Arrest

Late one afternoon, when Ursula had been working at Siemens for over two years, the telephone rang in her department. It was January 8, 1943. It rang so seldom, Ursula had a bad feeling about it. She was right. It was not good news. She was called to the supervisor's desk and told to go home. No one was allowed to leave unless they were ill. Although Ursula was terrified, she felt sure it must be a mistake of some kind. Her mother was only half Jewish, a fact that so far had kept the Naumanns safe. And since they all worked, and were useful to the government, they felt that would protect them, too.

Ursula cried as she waited for her train at the subway station. A soldier noticed and asked her what was wrong. When he saw that she was wearing a Jewish star, he simply said, "Oh!" Most German soldiers had been in Poland at the beginning of the war. They had seen the way that Jews were tortured and killed there. He knew that Ursula was afraid something similar would happen to her.

It had been dark for several hours when Ursula reached their four-story apartment building, but all of the lights were on in her apartment. That was unusual because no one in Germany was allowed to have lights showing after dark. She went upstairs to see what was happening.

Ursula's father didn't greet her at the door, as he usually did. Instead, two strangers were waiting for her. They were Jewish, too. They told her to pack whatever clothes she wanted to take. Her father was busily rolling up bed clothes on the dining table. Each person was permitted to take a blanket plus a suitcase that, when filled, weighed forty pounds.

Hannelore had been at home alone when the strangers arrived. From an upstairs window she'd seen them crossing the courtyard in the rear of their building. Although she was frightened, she was afraid that if she didn't let them in, they would break the door down. Ursula was frightened, too. She began to pack, but when she took some pictures from the wall, one of the men said, "Where you're going, you won't need those." Soon afterwards, her

mother arrived. Fortunately she had remembered to pick up their boots from the shoemaker.

The same thing occurred in homes all over the city. Like the Naumanns, occasionally families were picked up by other Jews forced to do this horrendous task by the Nazis; others were arrested by Nazi soldiers. When the Naumanns finished packing, they were led downstairs and loaded into a large moving van. It took them to a school on the east side of Berlin where many other people were already gathered. They were to be deported. That was all they knew.

1943

The Waiting Period

When the Naumanns arrived at the school, it was complete chaos, people crying and screaming. Some families huddled together in an attempt to stay calm. Everyone was terrified and upset. Nothing could comfort them or take away their fears. People screamed at the new arrivals, "Where did you come from?" "Do you know what happened to . . . ?" Everyone hoped to gain information about relatives or friends.

The Naumanns first had to register. Mr. Naumann showed the soldiers two documents which proved that the children had a Catholic grandfather. A cousin who worked at the Jewish Federation Office had advised them to carry a copy of the grandfather's birth certificate, and a letter showing that they were in contact with him.

Margarete hadn't wanted to show either document. She said that she'd rather go to Auschwitz, Poland, with the young people, than to Theresienstadt, Czechoslovakia, with the old people. Those with some Christian blood like the Naumanns were usually sent to Theresienstadt. Fortunately, Ursula's father ignored what his wife was saying, and, by doing so, saved their lives. When they went upstairs to their room, they saw that every room on every floor was blocked off by wooden boards. This prevented people from going from one area to another. The situation the Naumanns found themselves came as such a shock after their normal, peaceful, happy home. There had been no warning that their lives were about to change so abruptly.

The Naumanns were herded into a small room that already held thirty to forty people. To sleep, everyone lined up along opposite walls, their feet meeting in the middle of the room. Since it was a school, each floor had toilets and wash basins, but the overcrowded conditions were unbelievable. Next morning Ursula's mother cried hysterically. It was the only time she lost control. The rest of the family were upset by her tears. Someone had overheard what Ursula's mother had said about wanting to go to Auschwitz.

They told her that Theresienstadt was a much better place. They were right. Few Jews survived Auschwitz.

After one night at the school, the Naumanns were marched to a second camp where they waited for about three weeks. Once there were enough people to fill a transport train, they would be transferred to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp. The new camp was much nicer than the first one. It was smaller and had fewer people.

For a few days the Naumanns even had a room to themselves, then a pathetic, very old couple moved in with them. They called each other "Mamashen" and "Papashen" and no longer knew or understood what was happening to them. They still expected their son in England to come and get them.

Most of the people at the second camp were over sixty-five, or had been wounded in WW1. Some, like the Naumanns, had a Christian relative in the family. Ursula and her sister, Hannelore, were the only young ones in the group. During the waiting period, they were restricted from going near the windows. No one living or working across the street was to know that they were there, or why.

1943 Deportation

Before boarding the transport train, German S.S. guards came to look everyone over. Someone told Ursula to make herself look smaller so that the S.S. would think she was younger than seventeen and not send her to Auschwitz. Ursula passed the inspection and she and her family were sent, together, to Theresienstadt. At the time, she didn't know how fortunate she was. Not one of their Jewish relatives or friends from Berlin survived. Not everyone survived Theresienstadt, either. Many died of starvation or disease, or were sent from there to Auschwitz.

It was dark when the prisoners walked to the train station. A great many people were packed into the train. Luggage was everywhere, some of it on luggage racks above their heads. Soon after the train started one of the suitcases fell on a woman's head. Fortunately Ursula's mother had packed a first aid kit, so someone cleaned and bandaged the woman's wound. It was a slow, tedious journey. The train stopped frequently. However, their fourth class train was considerably more comfortable than the cattle cars that took prisoners to Auschwitz. The train, usually used by farmers, had a lot of space down the center of each compartment for the farmers' goods, and had seats only along the sides.

A hundred people rode to Theresienstadt together. There were very few families. Because everyone was fearful of what lay ahead of them, the journey was an upsetting one. There had been many rumors about Jewish prisoners

being murdered, gassed, by the Nazis. Auschwitz, and some of the other camps, had earned the nickname, “death camps.” But no one knew how much of what they heard was true.

As the train journeyed on, Ursula became more and more terrified. Whenever the train stopped, Ursula told Hannelore, “They’re going to gas us now.” And even though she was younger than Ursula, Hannelore wasn’t as fearful. She always said, “Don’t talk such nonsense.” Ursula had heard that Jewish prisoners were often loaded into trucks for transportation to one of the camps, but when the truck stopped, they gassed their prisoners using the truck’s exhaust. Hitler and his supporters were so determined to exterminate every Jew; they used any method they could find.

The journey seemed endless. Afterwards, the Naumanns couldn’t even remember how many nights they were on the train. It was all a blur. As people talked together, they sometimes managed to laugh or joke; at other times they fell silent, or they cried softly. No one wanted to think about what might lie ahead.

It was night when the train finally stopped. They were in Czechoslovakia now. There was no station in Theresienstadt itself, but since people arrived there constantly, a station was a necessity. Theresienstadt prisoners built one soon after the Naumanns’ arrival. As everyone walked the last few miles to the camp, Ursula turned to a boy walking beside her and said, “It doesn’t look so bad.” Then, as they arrived, Ursula’s mother commented, “Now at least we don’t have to worry about being deported. It’s already happened.”

1943 **Theresienstadt Concentration Camp**

Theresienstadt, known locally as Terezin, was an ancient walled city. The Czechoslovakian people who had lived in its massive stone buildings before the war had been moved out so that the town could be used as a prison. They’d had no choice in the matter. Like many old walled cities, it was built for around 15,000 occupants. The German guards and Nazi officers had taken over the best and most spacious accommodation in the town, and the prisoners were crammed, “concentrated,” into the rest of the buildings. Sometimes as many as 60,000 to 70,000 Jews were imprisoned there.

The Naumanns were led into a large building. Since it had a sandy floor, it looked very much like a stable. It was extremely brightly lit, and, at one end, several S.S. men stood behind long tables. They first examined everyone’s belongings, taking thermoses, candles, and everything else that had any value to them. Later the new arrivals were allowed to lie on the ground to sleep. Some died during the night. The experience had been too much for them.

The morning after their arrival, the Naumanns walked through snow-covered streets to get to their quarters. The guards stopped at one of the houses, informing the Naumanns that they were assigned to an attic. They were each given a sack of straw to sleep on, and when they reached their accommodation, they found that it was dimly lit and already crowded with people. They were so shocked they couldn't move. The only space left for them was near the door. There was no privacy.

When it was bedtime, Ursula did not get undressed. There were men, women and children filling every inch of the room and it was a week before Ursula felt comfortable getting undressed in such a place. There was a pump in the courtyard below their room, but, being January, the water was ice cold. It was impossible to wash outside, and there was no privacy there either.

The Naumanns' worries were far from over. Jews constantly arrived at the camp - and then were gone. Every few days people were being sent to Auschwitz. Within two hours of their arrival in Auschwitz, most of them were murdered in the gas chambers. Only those aged 13 to 35, who were also strong and healthy, had a chance of survival. They were put to work at the factories and mines in the area. One of the factories produced Zyklon B Gas, the gas used for killing Jews in the gas chambers. Sometimes it was used to kill family members of those who were forced to produce it.

Ursula and her mother were ordered to clean the muddy outdoor walkways of a large stone building. Her father and sister were assigned different work. The building had formerly been a garrison for soldiers and walkways connected the rooms on each level. Ursula just stood and cried. It was an impossible task and she was incapable of helping. Working alone, on a bitterly cold day, her mother hacked at the mud with a hoe, rinsed her rags repeatedly, and refilled her bowl with icy water from the courtyard pump. Both she and Ursula were extremely hungry.

1943 and 1944 **The Red Cross Visit**

Hunger never left Ursula and her family during their months at Theresienstadt. The food was edible, but there was very little of it. Half a loaf of brown bread had to last each person three days; two ounces of sugar and margarine had to last a week. For breakfast they were served a brown liquid referred to as coffee. For lunch, there was barley, potatoes, some kind of meat sauce, and a dumpling, or a soft white roll with sweet brown sauce. The evening meal consisted of a watery, greenish-colored liquid that was referred to as lentil soup. But no matter how awful something was, they ate it. However, many prisoners constantly suffered from diarrhea due to the poor quality of the food.

Before long, Ursula's father was assigned to a barracks that was for men only. At the end of the summer, her mother was moved into a barracks that held twenty to thirty women. The young people moved into a building together, Home 3. There were about thirty-two of them sharing one room. Life became much more pleasant for Ursula. The girls were younger than Ursula, but she was allowed to be there because of her sister. They slept in three-story bunks, and there was a table and two benches. An older person, Ida Hellman, lived with them and acted as their counselor.

They had to work, but being all young people together, they managed to make life bearable for each other. As factory workers they were needed and therefore protected. The girls were responsible for making mica, a hard, thin, shiny, transparent material. It was used for insulation. Margarete worked on the same product, but in a different barracks. In all, four barracks were used as factories.

Whenever any of the Naumanns had extra food to share, they got together. One day, when Ursula was visiting her mother, she said "Today is a good day. Your father was working with the transports as they arrived and a lot of sandwiches were left behind." They couldn't believe how good they tasted! But, although, for a moment, life seemed better, it was difficult to forget the war for very long. They were prisoners, and they were Jewish.

Transports left constantly for Auschwitz. In 1944 the Camp Commandant was informed that the Swiss Red Cross was coming to inspect the camp. It was important that both the accommodations and the occupants should appear as clean and well cared for as possible. Most importantly, the camp could not look overcrowded. And so, most of the prisoners were quickly shipped to Auschwitz. The Red Cross visit was their death sentence.

Signs saying such things as, "To the bank," "To the library," suddenly appeared. The Theresienstadt prisoners were given paper money that had been printed at the camp. A playground was built for the children. Musicians played in a pavilion in the plaza. Everyone was allowed to walk in the plaza in the evenings, making it appear to be a nice little city.

The Red Cross believed all they saw. At the bank, the "play money" could be exchanged for real money and could be spent on items such as mustard or clothes (used ones) at the shops around the square. Until the Red Cross arrived, the shops had been used as barracks. People slept there in three story bunks just as they did elsewhere in the camp. Miraculously, the buildings had become shops again.

The Nazis wanted the Red Cross to tell the world that Theresienstadt was a normal place, a place where people were comfortable and well-treated. But as soon as the Red Cross left the camp, the transports to Auschwitz began again.

Ursula's father was among those who were shipped out. Ursula never saw him again. At Theresienstadt, the prisoners each had a food card. It was stamped as they received their portion of food. One day the people working in the kitchen forgot to stamp her father's card, so he got in line for a second serving of soup.

A ghetto policeman noticed, and, following a trial in which he was sentenced to a week in prison, he was shipped to Auschwitz. Anyone in prison was sent to Auschwitz. That second bowl of soup cost him his life. After the war the family received his death certificate. It stated that he had "perished." He was in fact murdered. Gassed.

At the time, Ursula's father was told that he was being sent to Germany to work. He and his family believed it. It was fall of 1944, around the time of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Like her daughters, Margarete was working in the mica factory and was needed there. Since she was partially Christian, she was on a different list from the other women.

Some women volunteered to join the transports, believing that they would be reunited with their husbands. Margarete's cousin who'd worked at the Berlin Jewish Federation was also at Theresienstadt. She told Margarete not to volunteer. None of the women had any idea that their husbands had already been killed.

Theresienstadt had become a ghost town and everyone feared that they, too, would be killed. Since the camp was in Czechoslovakia, Czech Jews had been the first arrivals. They had been assigned all of the best jobs. But now the Czechs were gone. The camp was short handed. Workers were needed everywhere.

Hannelore got a job in the camp kitchen. She had to be up at 3:00, do her kitchen work, then be at the factory by 7 a.m. But from then on, Ursula and her mother were no longer hungry. Life for them was much better than it had been at first. Ursula had no idea what had happened to her father, but the family remained optimistic that he was still alive.

January to May 1945 Final Months of the War

When Germany invaded Russia, they had treated the Russians with extreme cruelty; the Germans did NOT want to be there when the Russians arrived. Nor did they want them to see the condition of their prisoners. Many adults weighed only 75 pounds. And so the Germans marched their prisoners out of the camps, barely keeping ahead of the approaching Russians.

The primary objective of the Nazis was still the same: to kill every Jew. They could not let them be liberated. They would tell the world of their treatment, besides identifying guards who had behaved inhumanely. The

death march lasted for four months. If a prisoner stumbled or fell behind he was shot immediately. Other prisoners carried the dead on wooden wagons. Many died of disease. There were no toilet or washing facilities and no treatment for the sick.

On January 17, 1945, over 40,000 Jews remained in the Auschwitz camps. Not all of them marched. Many were sent to Theresienstadt. It seemed unlikely that the Russians would liberate that particular camp for some months since Theresienstadt was further away from Russian lines. When the first Auschwitz prisoners arrived at Theresienstadt, it was not difficult to imagine the kind of treatment they'd endured. They arrived in cattle cars and most could no longer walk. Although they were young, they looked like skeletons, the walking dead. They all wore dirty, thin, ragged, blue-and-white striped uniforms; a number tattooed on their left arms. To their captives, that's all they were, numbers, not people. But miraculously, each man had continued to survive,

Throughout their imprisonment, the Naumanns, and the other prisoners at Theresienstadt Concentration Camp had worn their own clothes. And although the clothes were old and worn, they had not starved, and they had not had to suffer the indignity of having a number tattooed on their arms. They began to realize they had been fortunate in a great many ways compared with those at other camps. But it wasn't long after the Auschwitz prisoners' arrival that Ursula learned that her father had been gassed the day he'd reached Auschwitz.

There were no newspapers at Theresienstadt, but every day a posted sign listed the orders for the day. On May 8th, quite unexpectedly, the Naumanns read a rather strange order. When it was time for bed, they were told not to undress. At that time the Red Cross was supervising the camp. And even though the German guards had vanished, everyone was still nervous. No one knew what would happen next. They fully expected the Germans to return at any moment and bomb the camp.

That evening, everyone stayed indoors talking quietly. One of the men prisoners came to the room where Ursula sat. That was unusual. No one had permission to be outside the buildings after 8 p.m., or go from building to building. He talked to his daughter and then to Ursula. "Don't you know?" he said. "The Russians are here." But for many, they had come too late. Only 6% of those imprisoned at Theresienstadt had survived.

The war had officially ended at 11 a.m. on May 7, the day before the occupants of Theresienstadt received the news. Germany had surrendered to what were known as the Allied Forces. At that time the Allies consisted primarily of troops from Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Every European country except neutral Switzerland had

been overrun and occupied by the German army early in the war. For a long time Great Britain had fought alone.

Theresienstadt and the Auschwitz camps in Poland (of which there were around forty in all), were all liberated by the Russians, and were the last camps to be reached. Fortunately, since they were further away from the approaching Russian lines, the prisoners at Theresienstadt had not spent four months on a forced death march like the Auschwitz prisoners.

Sadly, so many who had survived the intolerable living and working conditions at Auschwitz died on the Death March, shot if they stumbled or fell as they walked. Dysentery had killed many others. For them, the march was by far the worst time of their whole wartime experience. Of the 40,000 who began the march from Auschwitz, only 100 were still alive.

When the Russians came, they nursed the Auschwitz prisoners as best they could. Many prisoners were in terrible condition and extremely ill when they arrived, unable to digest enough food to make them well again. The Russians had both food and medication. They restored order to the camp, feeding and caring for everyone. At last the prisoners were free, free to once again pick up the pieces of their broken lives, free to search for any relatives who might have survived. Free. But with nowhere to go.

URSULA

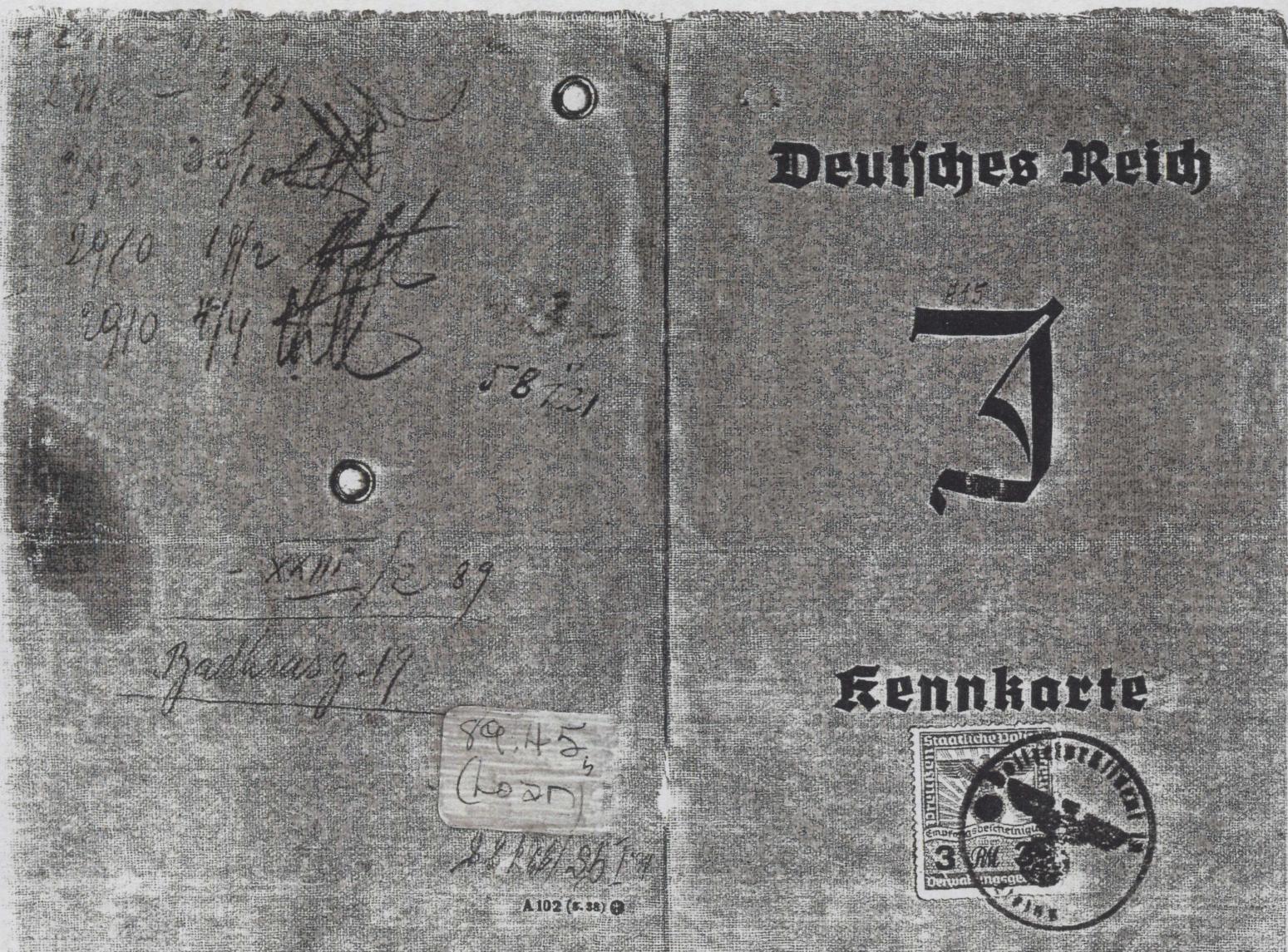


Having fun with friends at a summer camp at Mariendorf.
Ursula is in the center of the picture. August 1934



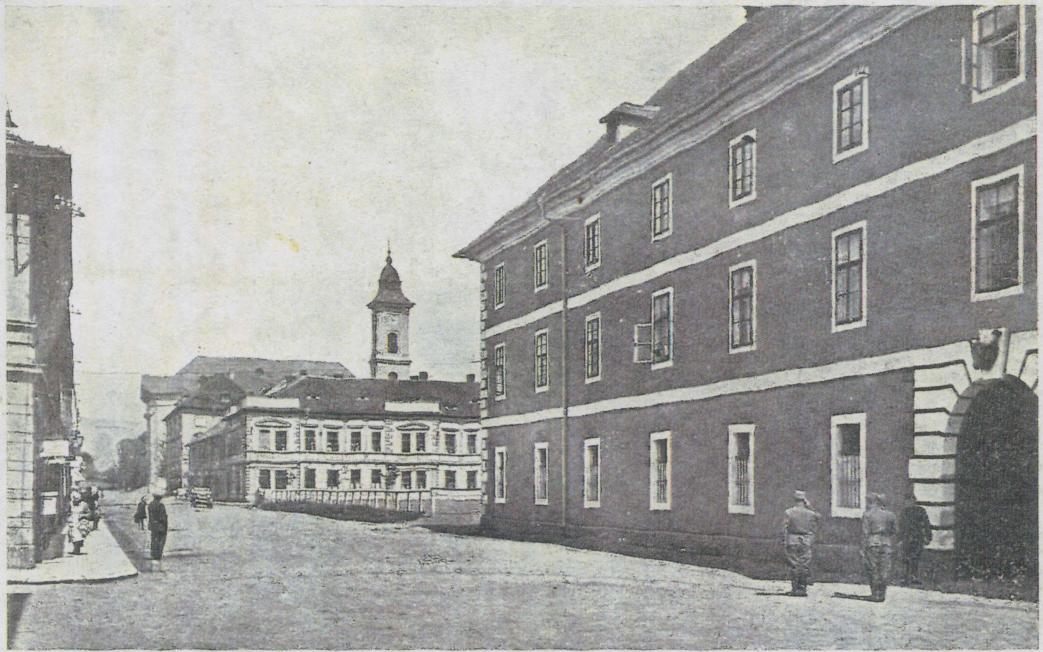
At the grandparents' house in Pasewalk in the summer of 1934. Ursula is standing in the center (with a striped shirt), Hannelore, her sister, is on the far right. Ursula's Christian grandfather is on the far left, and Aunt Agi is seated with a small child on her lap. The rest of the group are aunts, uncles, and cousins.

URSULA



The reverse side of a Jewish person's Kennkarte (Identity Card) showing the large "J" for "Juden," Jew.

URSULA



THERESIENSTADT

The concentration camp where Ursula, Hannelore, and Margarete were imprisoned from January 1943 to July 1945



URSULA



The reverse side of a Jewish person's Kennkarte (Identity Card) showing the large "J" for "Juden," Jew.



The “play money” issued to the prisoners at the Theresienstadt just before the arrival of the Red Cross. During the Red Cross visit the “play money” could be traded for real money at the banks that suddenly appeared, and spent at the shops that also suddenly appeared.



Ursula's Jewish star. It had to be worn on all outer garments during World War Two. **URSULA**

URSULA



Displaced Persons' Camp at Deggendorf
where Gerhard and Ursula met, and lived,
as they waited for permission to go to
America. 1946



Wedding picture of Ursula and Gerhard,
May 27, 1947. Ursula's mother, Margarete
Naumann is also in the picture.



Inge Gorczelancik, Ursula's closest friend.
This photograph is her only memorial.
There is no record of her disappearance or
death. It is as if she never existed. 1940

72994

UNITED STATES LINES COMPANY

AGENT

PASSENGER TICKET—(Not Transferrable)

1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.

ONE Class Ship MARINE FLASHER (As agreed)

Scheduled to sail 2/27/47 (Passenger to be advised) 19

At (Not known) From Pier. (Passenger to be advised)

FROM BREMEN (As agreed) TO NEW YORK (As agreed)

NAMES OF PASSENGERS (This Passage is subject to terms printed, typed, stamped, or written below and on back of all pages)				Sex	Age	Room	Berth	Ocean Fare \$	Taxes Collected
NAUMANN, MARGARETE				F	43	6 VI	E 15	200.	3.
NAUMANN, HANNELORE				F	19	6 VI	E 14	200.	8.

4 Adults, — Children, — Quarters, — Infants, — Servants. TOTAL OCEAN FARE \$ 400. —
 Issued at Bremen
 Total 16.
 2/22/47
 416.
 16.
 TOTAL AMOUNT RECEIVED \$ 416.

URSULA

By acceptance of this Contract to
 on the ship, the passenger named he
 incorporated herein as part hereof, she
 and the passenger in every possible co

Passenger ticket for Margarete and
 Hannelore Naumann's passage to
 America on February 27, 1947.
 Ursula was issued with a separate
 ticket.

RECEIPT

STATES EMBARKATION CARD
 Einschiffungskarte

MARINE FLASHER

S/S 27. Feb. 1947

Accommodation Schiffssplatz 6 VI - E15

Mr. Mrs. Miss NAUMANN, MARGARETE

F 0989 A 7626

URSULA



Cattle car transport in which Ursula and her fiancé, Gerhard, rode from Munich to Bremerhaven prior to their departure for America in 1947. Ursula is on the far right; her mother and sister Hannelore (wearing headscarves) are in the center of the picture.



Cattle car transport in which Gerhard and his fiancé, Ursula, rode from Munich to Bremerhaven prior to their departure for America. Ursula is on the far left with her sister Hannelore next to her; their mother, Margarete, is second from the right.



Gerhard in 1946, one year after the war ended.



Ursula and Gerhard on their wedding day, May 27, 1947.

URSULA

AFTERWORD

Although Ursula, Pat, and Hilda have never met, all three are linked forever by their experiences: their triumphs and tragedies, their joys and sorrows, and in each case, a common will to survive. All three attend reunions with survivors who shared the same types of experiences, and although their experiences were different, what they each lived through is as alive for them today as it was over fifty years ago. By a strange quirk of fate, the two girls who began life in Berlin, as adults, have both made new lives in Los Angeles, California.

Hilda:

In August 1949, Hilda married Hershel Fogelson. She was twenty-three. Her new husband, Hershel, usually referred to as Hershey, was originally from Chicago. He was a psychologist. They met when they were both working for the Veteran's Hospital in Los Angeles. In 1955, after Hilda's father died, her mother sold the farm. She got a good price and was able to live comfortably from then on. The land is no longer a farm. Homes have been built on it, and today it has been swallowed up by the huge city of Los Angeles. However, the area is still known as Van Nuys.

Once her three sons had started school, Hilda went to college to become a teacher. She taught elementary school students for many years. As retirees, both Hilda and Hershel enjoyed running, traveling, and spending time with their children and grandchildren. Sadly, Hershel died in July, 1999, less than a month before their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

Hilda and Hershel experienced both sides of the war. Hershel was in the 14th Armored Division of the United States Army. His division was nicknamed "The Liberators" because of the prisoner of war and concentration camps they captured from the Germans in the spring of 1945, the year the war ended.

From time to time Hershel attended reunions with soldiers he fought with in France and Germany. Hilda meets with other Kindertransport survivors. She finds that from the minute they see each other, even though the train journey was over sixty years ago, it is as if it happened yesterday. The bond between them is unbreakable because of the experience they shared.

Hilda and Hershel have three sons, and six grandchildren. They all live in the Los Angeles area. They taught their children, as they had been taught, that getting a good education was of tremendous importance. All three chose challenging professions. David, the oldest, is a psychiatrist at U.C.L.A., Steven is an entertainment lawyer for Warner Brothers, and George, the youngest, has a master's degree in Public Administration. He works for the

City of Los Angeles. Nine people are alive today because Hilda survived the horror that was prewar Germany.

Pat:

When Pat was eighteen, she attended teachers' training college in London, and at age twenty, started teaching in an elementary school quite close to the one that she and Tony had gone to as small children. When she was twenty-three she married Michael Lea, a civil engineer with the Taylor Woodrow Company. Together they lived in Oman, Singapore, Dubai, and Malaysia, with periods in England between some of the overseas assignments.

Life was exciting for them as they constantly adjusted to new homes, new environments, and new cultures. Sometimes they stayed in one place for as long as five years; at other times they moved after only six months. But wherever they were, Pat continued to teach, enjoying her work with the youngest of the school-age children more and more. Eventually she specialized in nursery school education, teaching both teachers and parents about the early childhood years.

Pat and Mike had three children: Simon, Sarah, and Jane. When they grew up, Sarah became a Data Analyst, Jane trained as a nurse, and Simon became a pig farmer. Two of them are married, and Pat has three grandsons. After Pat and Mike had been married for 25 years, Mike became ill. They were living in Malaysia at the time. They returned to England in order for Mike to have medical treatment. He died of cancer 32 months later. He was 54.

After Mike's death, Pat moved into Swanfield House, a home that they had chosen together before he died. She continued to teach, but also worked with the Sunday School at her church and at the Hospice that had looked after Mike. She developed an interest in flower arranging, and began doing bouquets and floral arrangements for local weddings.

After a while Pat began visiting some of the countries that she and Mike had lived in together. It was very sad to be there without Mike, but thinking of the things they had done when they lived in each area made Mike seem closer.

Pat's father died in 1962, and her mother died in 2006 at age 98. When Pat was twenty-two, she took husband Mike to Cornwall to visit the farm where she lived as an evacuee. She has returned every summer since then, and after her husband's death, her mother accompanied her on her annual visits.

Dorothy and Norman are no longer alive, and their daughter, Kathleen, died in 1970. Today, Lillian's son Keith manages the farm. During the hot summer days in Cornwall, Pat and her mother relive their memories of those

long ago summers of 1940 and 1941. Pat's two daughters, her son, and their children, also visit Cornwall. It is a time they look forward to with happiness, not sadness. Tony seems so close while they are there.

On September 3, 1999, a service was held in London's Westminster Abbey for all those who had been evacuees. It marked the sixtieth anniversary of the outbreak of war on September 3, 1939. Two out of every three London children had been evacuated to the countryside during the first three days of September that year. Those who attended the reunion wore labels around their necks just like those they'd worn sixty years before. Some carried gas masks. Young children, dressed up in the clothes of the period, also wore labels.

During the service a soloist sang a song that was first sung in 1939 by Gracie Fields, a song that was heard many times during the war, and served to comfort those living the war years far away from their parents.

*“Goodnight children ev’rywhere. Your mummy thinks of you tonight . . .
Tho’ you are far away, she’s with you night and day. Goodnight children
ev’rywhere.”*

Many tears were shed by the terrified children on September 3, 1939. On September 3, 1999, tears were also shed, tears of both joy and sorrow as the memories came flooding back, and friendships that had begun sixty years before were renewed.

Ursula:

Ursula and her family stayed in Theresienstadt until July 1945. Auschwitz survivors had been marched to Theresienstadt, many dying along the way as the Germans desperately tried to keep the survivors ahead of the approaching Russians. Their treatment of the prisoners must remain a secret.

The survivors from Auschwitz brought typhus-carrying lice. Even nineteen-year-old Ursula was asked to assist in nursing them. But as hard as the Russian nurses and the camp volunteers worked, death was everywhere. When the epidemic was over, Ursula's family was free to shop in the local villages and even have their hair done. The 1944 Red Cross visitors had provided them all with money. They bought food and vegetables and sent postcards to those relatives that had perhaps survived. Ursula's mother even made an apple pie.

The Naumann's knew they did not want to return to Berlin. With Russian soldiers roaming the streets, it was not a safe place for three women. There was no train service to Berlin and probably no relatives had survived. It was currently illegal to go to Israel and when a meeting was held for those interested in going to America, the Naumann's decided that it would be a good

place to begin their new lives. In the meantime, they would be sent to Deggendorf, a Displaced Persons Camp near Munich.

Although they enjoyed the comparative luxury of Deggendorf, a former German officers' camp, they were anxious to start their new lives. There were nightly dances for the young people, those with musical talent put on a cabaret and a musical, others created a camp newspaper, and some wrote a camp song. Except for her childhood, it was the happiest time of Ursula's life. In spring 1946, Ursula met Gerhard, her future husband. The Naumanns had been at Theresienstadt with Gerhard's parents but Gerhard had been in Buna, one of the Auschwitz labor camps. When the death march ended, he'd weighed only 75 pounds.

The Jews in the camp tried to forget that they were German. They had learned some English in school and their English improved as they talked to the American soldiers they met in town, at the pool, or at the camp's theater productions. Before long, all of the young people had boyfriends and girlfriends. They went for walks and to see American movies in town. The Jewish survivors felt they had the right to walk right into the movie theater, ignoring the Germans who were waiting in line to buy tickets.

In late 1946, Gerhard and the Naumanns registered to go to America. During the four weeks that their application was being processed, they were put in a camp in Munich. The huts were overcrowded and they were hungry. The ultimate insult came when they were taken to Bremerhaven on the north German coast in cattle cars. They were once again being treated as prisoners. The camp was overcrowded and bitterly cold. As they waited for the ship behind a barbed wire fence it seemed as if the nightmare had begun again.

A coal strike delayed their departure for four weeks, but on February 27, 1947, Margarete's forty-third birthday, they boarded the troop transporter, the "Marine Flasher." An American organization paid the \$150 per-passenger cost of their Atlantic crossing. Gerhard had sailed a week earlier. It was a rough crossing, many passengers were sick, and Margarete commented, "We made it through the camps and now we'll probably drown!"

Three days after arriving in New York, Ursula was already working as a waitress - for only \$1 a day! Gerhard was working in a gas station while Ursula's mother and sister worked as housekeepers.

On May 27, 1947, Gerhard and Ursula were married. Ursula was twenty-one. After taking one job and then another, they moved to Miami, had three children, and began making friends. Gerhard's car repair business provided them with a comfortable home. Weekly, they met with Holocaust survivors, and, in 1986, Gerhard organized a reunion in San Diego for those who had been with them in Deggendorf. The reunions have continued.

In 1979, Ursula and Gerhard moved to Los Angeles and Gerhard taught automotive repair classes at community colleges. Together, Gerhard and Ursula have revisited the camps in Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Memories and images came crowding back. They have also visited places that, prior to 1933, held only happy memories for each of them but every trip is filled with bittersweet memories.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ann Stalcup is an author and elementary school teacher. She grew up in England and moved to the United States in 1963. She is married to a Texan and lives with him in Malibu, California, where, as retirees, she writes and he paints. She is the author of eighteen books. Her first, "On the Home Front: Growing Up in Wartime England," is an autobiographical account of her childhood experiences during World War II. She loves to travel, and as teachers, she and her husband have spent their long summer vacations visiting over 180 countries. Her numerous published magazine articles (mostly for Cobblestone's Faces Magazine), and many of her books, are inspired by trips she has taken. A recent publication, "Leo Politi, Artist of the Angels," is a biography of a Los Angeles artist and author whom she admired for many years. It is the book of which she is most proud. Her most recent publication is a bilingual picture book. Since then she has added another picture book set in Mexico and the story of the Navajo Code Talkers who fought the war in the Pacific.

Ann Stalcup is the author of
On the Home Front, Growing up in Wartime England,
selected in 1998 by the Children's Book Council as a
Notable Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies.

This book tells the stories of three child survivors of World War II. One spent her childhood in England, the other two in Germany. Each of their stories is quite different. Pat was four-and-a-half when the war between Great Britain and Germany began on September 3, 1939, but it wasn't until she was seven that her family life in England changed drastically. For Hilda and Ursula, both born in Berlin, their worlds turned upside down on January 30, 1933, when Hitler was elected Chancellor of Germany. Hilda would be seven four months later; Ursula had just had her seventh birthday. All three children survived the war for different reasons and in different locations. One escaped Germany days before war was declared, one barely lived through a bombing raid in England, while the third survived a concentration camp. As young children, all three had wonderfully happy childhoods, childhoods that changed suddenly and unexpectedly for each of them when they were seven.



iUniverse®

www.iuniverse.com

U.S. \$14.95

ISBN 978-1-4502-7700-6

90000



9 781450 277006